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THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

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BOSTON ARTISTS

A PARISIAN IN AMERICA

FOUR FANCIES

IN THE PATH OF THE SOUL

THE SEVEN RICHEST HEIRESSES OF FRANCE

THE SIX GREAT PRINCESSES

THE ÆSTHETIC PURPOSE OF BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE AND OTHER ESSAYS

*The Empress Eugénie*

*From a Portrait by Winterhalter*

# THE TRUE STORY
## OF THE
# EMPRESS EUGÉNIE
## BY THE COUNT DE SOISSONS
WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

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# THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

# THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

## CHAPTER I

### HER BIRTH AND ORIGIN

THE origin of Eugénie de Montijo is no less puzzling than her complex Ego. According to the official version and those writers who complacently adhere to it, Maria-Eugenia-Ignacia-Augustina was born on May 5, 1826, in Granada—capital of Andalusia and famous for its lovely women.

Her father was Cipriano Antonio de Guzman-Palafox y Porto-Carrero, Count de Téba, Marquess d'Ardales, afterwards Count de Montijo, Duke de Peñaranda, etc., and grandee of Spain.

Her mother was Maria-Manuela Kirkpatrick of Closeburn.

Prospère Mérimée, together with Augustin Filon, were responsible for the official version.

Mérimée was an old friend of the Countess de Montijo, who "amazed and enchanted him by her grace, her mental activity, the variety of her conversation and the extent of her knowledge." It

was she who gave him the story for "Carmen," which became so popular throughout the world.

The little village of Montijo is situated in the province of Badajoz. In 1697, Charles II. of Spain granted to John of Porto-Carrero the title of Count. The Porto-Carreros came to Spain from Genoa; one of them married into the ancient house of Guzman, through which marriage they became Counts de Téba.

Mérimée, who was entrusted by the Empress of the French with the task of writing her biography, says that of the marriage of a Porto-Carrero and a Countess de Téba were born three brothers: Antonio, Branlio and Joaquin. Joaquin, he says, married Maria-Manuela Kirkpatrick, a daughter of William Kirkpatrick of Closeburn. His wife was Doña Francisca de Grévigné, of a noble family from Liége, and whose sister, Doña Catalina, married Count Mathieu de Lesseps, Commissary General of the French Republic in Spain and father of the famous Ferdinand de Lesseps, whose name will shine on the pages of history notwithstanding the mud thrown at it by the Jews and the Republicans. He was a second cousin of the Empress of the French.

However, in the file of the *Gazette des Tribunaux* for 1831 there is a report of a law-suit which throws a very different light on the marriage of Joaquin de Montijo.*

This document, which is given in full in the Appendix, proves that a lady named Doña Maria

* See Appendix.

del Pilar married Joaquin, Count Téba, the only Montijo who served under Napoleon in 1810, and who, in 1814, fired the last shot against the allied troops; that they were divorced in 1813 and became reconciled in 1820; that in 1823 Doña Maria became a widow with two children, a girl who died in 1823, and a boy who passed away at the age of fifteen.

However, according to the official version, Pacca, the elder daughter of Doña Maria Manuela, was born in 1825, and Eugénie, the future Empress of the French, in 1826.

In presence of these facts, one must surmise that either the quoted document concerns Doña Maria Manuela's sister-in-law or that after the death of her first husband she married one of her brothers-in-law—the second Count de Montijo having died only in 1839.

At any rate, that Count de Montijo who in 1814 fought for France cannot be Eugénie's father, as the official version has it. His Christian name was Joaquin, and this was not the name given of Eugénie's father. Was her father, then, Don Antonio de Montijo, who hated France? This Montijo died in 1839, while his brother, who fought gallantly at Buttes-Chaumont, passed away two years before her birth.

Where is the truth? Why do the official biographers and their followers affirm that Eugénie's father was that Montijo who fought for France, when it is obviously untrue?

When these doubts were expressed in the Opposition press under the Empire, several law-

suits were instituted against the authors of the articles; then the Imperial Government not only caused certain papers to disappear from the Court archives, but even destroyed the reports published in the *Gazette des Tribunaux*. In this regard Rochefort said in *La Lanterne*, of September 20th, 1868:

"It is a known fact that the present government caused the report of the Montijo law-suits to be eliminated from all the files of the *Gazette des Tribunaux* in France."

Rochefort's veracity might be doubted, but his statement is supported by the Count de Vieil-Castel, who was born at Malmaison, brought up in the Napoleonic cult, and who in his Memoirs says that "Napoleon III. is convinced that it is possible to impose upon posterity by falsifying present-day history."

This falsification was extended even to Valladolid, where the Imperial police caused all documents concerning the Montijo suits to disappear. Moreover, the authorities of Granada refused to furnish any documents concerning the Montijos, although they should have been proud that an Empress was born in their city.

Irénée Mauget says in her interesting *L'Impératrice Eugénie* that "the Count d'Herisson, in order to obtain the Empress's birth certificate, wrote numerous letters to the vicar of the parish in which her birth was registered, and did not even receive an answer."

"In order to answer several critics of the Opposition," says the same writer, "a semi-offi-

cial pamphlet was published. The birth certificates of the Empress and of the Duchess of Alba were inserted, but why was the pamphlet not signed? Why does one find at least eighty faults in the certificates published in that pamphlet when comparing them with those which are deposited in Granada? Those who wish to prove too much bring forth distrust."

There is one more question. Why did Napoleon III., a few days before his marriage, institute a special jurisdiction for the civil acts concerning his family? Such a course was not only very unusual, but even hardly justifiable.

In the presence of such facts, evil tongues could hardly be checked from saying that Eugénie and her sister Pacca, Duchess of Alba, were not the daughters of the Count de Montijo. It was even affirmed that neither were they the daughters of the Countess de Montijo.

In a book entitled *Le Secret de Bonaparte*, Ch. Nauroy says:

"It is only after long hesitation that I publish the following facts.

"The two birth certificates published in the semi-official pamphlet called *L'Impératrice* are authentic, but they are not those of the Empress and her sister the late Duchess of Alba. They are the birth certificates of Mme. de Montijo's two daughters, who died in infancy.

"Neither the Empress nor the Duchess of Alba are Mme. de Montijo's daughters. . . .

"The Empress was twenty-six years old when she married, two years older than the official birth

certificate shows; the late Duchess of Alba was a little older than was stated in the official certificate. Maria-Manuela Kirkpatrick, Countess of Montijo, was not their mother.

" Both of them were born of the body of Queen Cristina, consanguineal sister of the Duchesse de Berry and great-niece of Marie-Antoinette, before her marriage with Ferdinand VII.

" Queen Cristina was married only when she was twenty-three years old, and it is a known fact that she had several lovers before her marriage."

In order to give this allegation some weight, the author says that he obtained the information from an intimate friend of the Duke of Ossuna.

As to Kirkpatrick, the Count de Vieil-Castel says, that he was an English tradesman who died a bankrupt.

The Norwegian authoress, Clara Tschudi, in her *Eugénie Empress of the French* says:

" At the beginning of this century there was living in Malaga a tradesman of the name of Kirkpatrick, a descendant of a well-known Scotch family, who had been obliged to flee his native land at the fall of the Stuarts. He was earning a livelihood as a dealer in colonial wares, and also by the sale of wine, which he himself dispensed to his customers in a room at the back of his shop. . . . His daughters made themselves useful by attracting customers to the house.

" The most ambitious as well as the most beautiful of Kirkpatrick's daughters was Manuela. Among the officers stationed in Malaga, most of whom regularly frequented Kirkpatrick's wine-

shop, was Cipriano, Count Téba, colonel of an artillery regiment. Count Téba had been a handsome man in his youth, but he had lost an eye in battle. He was no longer young, nor even particularly attractive, when Manuela Kirkpatrick first made his acquaintance. Regardless of his lack of personal attraction, she set herself to study his genealogy. . . . It assured her that Spain's purest *sangro azul* flowed in Téba's veins.

" It is true that Téba was a second son, but then his elder brother was unmarried, and Manuela felt that if she shared the fortunes of the younger man she might eventually occupy the rank she so ardently desired. She treated the Count with marked graciousness; upon him alone she lavished her smiles, her ardent glances, her bewitching loveliness. In his simplicity he took her advances for devotion, and, without consulting his family, he married Maria Manuela.

" They left Malaga for Granada with a little daughter, Francisca-Teresa, born in 1825. On May 5, 1826, Countess Téba was delivered of a second daughter, the future Empress of the French. In 1834 Count Téba stood by the grave of his childless brother. His wife, now Countess of Montijo, felt that her aim was attained.

" On the 28th of July, 1834, she left Spain with her two daughters and her little son, Paco, who died soon afterwards. In 1837 the future Empress and her sister were placed as boarders in the Sacré Cœur Convent in the rue de Varennes, Paris, where they were entered under the names of Francisa and Eugénie Palafox. The Countess of

Montijo returned to Spain. On hearing that her husband was ill she hastened to him, and when told that the malady was serious, she sent a messenger for her children, who at once left Paris accompanied by their English teacher, Miss Flowers. When they reached Madrid, however, the father of the future Empress Eugénie was already dead, having breathed his last on March 15, 1839."

Such, as far as they are known, are the facts concerning Eugénie's origin.

## CHAPTER II

### HER GIRLHOOD

FROM the day she entered this world, Eugénie's vicissitudes began.

Her mother was sitting in the garden when a terrific earthquake shook the houses of Granada; the Countess de Téba was delivered in the open air of the future Empress of the French.

When a mere child Eugénie began to travel, and this she continued to do during her whole life. This was the cause of her education being so defective. On the other hand, the continual mingling with strangers in hotels, her promiscuous acquaintances, developed her character: she became practical, well-informed, worldly-wise, proud and wilful.

Her mother was fond of the gay world, and when, after the expiration of the year of mourning, she began to receive in Madrid, where she was called " a woman with a head and heart," her At Homes were crowded with noblemen, diplomatists, politicians, artists and men of letters. Mérimée and Stendhal were her frequent guests.

Augustin Filon says of her: "She made all around her dance and sing. She scattered pleasures and created happiness on every side. She brought about marriages, and amused her fellow-beings till the last day of her life."

The Countess of Montijo passed the summer on her estate of Carabanchel, once the property of Count Cabarrus, father of the famous Mme. Tallien. Very fond of music and the theatre, she invited many actors and actresses to her country house and had operas and plays performed there.

Prospère Mérimée wrote to his friend Stendhal in 1836: "Mme. de Montijo is a complete and very beautiful type of the woman of Andalusia. She is an admirable friend." The same Mérimée wrote of her to Arago: "I do not know whether Mme. de Montijo is still pretty; she was so in my time. She was virtuous as well. It is possible that she has lost those two qualities."

Other writers are less charitable, for Clara Tschudi speaks of her "frivolous behaviour" and the Count de Vieil-Castel wrote quite frankly: "What would my brother Louis say now, for he was a lover of Eugénie's mother!"

Naturally, the surroundings and the mother's influence acted on the two young girls; Francisca, or Pacca, was now sixteen, and Eugénie fifteen years old. They were both beautiful, but their beauty was quite different. Francisca was slender and dark, while Eugénie was fair. The Earl of Malmesbury wrote of her in his "Memoirs of an ex-minister":

" June 21, 1851.

" Went to Lady Palmerston's party, where I saw Narvaez and the Spanish beauty, Mlle. Montijo. Narvaez, an ugly little fat man with a vile expression of countenance; Mlle. Montijo, very handsome, auburn hair, beautiful skin and figure. Her grandmother was Scotch, a Miss Kirkpatrick, which may account for her lovely complexion."

The following description of her was given by a contemporary who knew her well at Madrid:

" Her slender figure is well defined by a costly bodice, which enhances her beauty and elegance. Her dainty hand is armed with a riding-whip instead of a fan, for she generally arrives at the bull-ring on a wild Andalusian horse, and in her belt she carries a sharp-pointed dagger. Her little feet are encased in red satin boots. Her head is crowned with broad golden plaits, interwoven with pearls and fresh flowers. Her clear brow shines with youth and beauty, and her gentle blue eyes sparkle from beneath the long lashes which almost conceal them. Her exquisitely-formed nose, her mouth, fresher than a rose-bud, the perfect oval of her face, the loveliness of which is only equalled by her graceful bearing, arouse the admiration of all. She is the recognised queen of beauty."

Both sisters excited universal admiration, opinions differing as to which was the more beautiful. Their admirers were numerous, and the

Countess de Montijo and her beautiful daughters enjoyed themselves thoroughly, parties, dinners, balls and all sorts of entertainments following one after the other.

One evening there was a private theatrical performance in which Eugénie took the principal part with the Duke of Sesto in Alfred de Musset's *Caprice*. Gossiping tongues accused Eugénie of a marked flirtation with the gallant Duke, to which, it seems, her mother took exception, for she favoured a lineal descendant of James II. of Great Britain. This was Don James Stuart Fitz-James, eighth Duke of Berwick and fourteenth Duke of Alba. He was one of the highest grandees of Spain, and a descendant of the celebrated statesman and general, Ferdinand Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alba, who, under Philip II., was stadtholder of the Netherlands, and who conquered Portugal for that monarch.

The Duke of Alba, attracted by the beauty of the two sisters and encouraged by their mother, was constantly with them, but as he carefully avoided showing his preference for either, each considered herself the object of his attentions.

" Eugénie," says Clara Tschudi, " loved Alba with exaggerated enthusiasm . . . her passion blinded her, and she simply trusted him without weighing his behaviour."

However, when the designing mother told the Duke that he must either declare his intentions or cease his visits, he asked for the hand of Francisca. This was a terrible blow to the passionate Eugénie, who, hidden behind a door, overheard the Duke's

proposal and resolved to kill herself by taking poison.

Her life was saved; her pride overcame her affection, but she never forgot her cruel and unexpected disappointment. She regained her health slowly, but " her whole nervous system was shaken, and a slight shudder, a twitching of the eyelids which she never entirely lost, sudden fits of depression which would come on in the midst of enjoyment, hysterical weeping when anything disturbed her, may all be attributed to the poison which she had taken in her youth."

That affair also had a serious effect upon her character, for, wishing to forget the bitter disappointment of her first love, she threw herself into a vortex of pleasures; she became coquettish, eccentric, vain, and restless. She was often to be seen galloping through the streets of Madrid, smoking a cigarette, or even a cigar. Dressed in fancy costumes of her own invention, she was constantly at theatres and bullfights, flirting with the toreadors, whom she would present with red caps embroidered in gold. The shy and retiring girl changed into a bewitching beauty, and Madrid's most eligible suitors raved about her.

She took a large part in the festivities held on the occasion of Queen Isabella's marriage with Don Francisco d'Assiz, Duke of Cadiz, and that of her sister, the Infanta Louise, with the Duc de Montpensier, on October 10, 1846. Eugénie was a great deal in the company of both brothers, the Prince de Joinville and the Duc de Montpensier, with whom she went for long rides and danced regularly.

The Count de Vieil-Castel says that some years after,—Eugénie was then Empress—when "the whole Court of Spain went to a reception given by the Duchesse de Montpensier, and the Countess de Montijo, lady of the Palace of the Queen, was also present, the Duc de Montpensier went to her and said:

"'Good morning, Countess. Have you any news from your daughter, the Countess de Téba? *J'ai retenu un charmant souvenir d'elle.*'

"The Countess de Montijo, hearing those ironic words, pronounced loudly, in the midst of the court, with an insulting intention, became embarrassed, grew red, then pale, and collapsed."

Through the influence of that "ugly little fat man," Narvaez, Queen Isabella appointed her one of her maids-of-honour, but the Queen of Spain—though giving the very worst moral example herself—took exception to her disregard of court etiquette, and especially to her taking evening walks in company with one of the young pages, and dismissed her.

Notwithstanding this unpleasant occurrence, Narvaez's influence was strong enough to prevail upon Isabella to appoint Eugénie's mother to the high post of *Camarera-Mayor*. On this occasion Mérimée wrote to the Countess de Montijo:

"So you have already become *Camarera-Mayor*, and you are happy! This is sufficient to satisfy me. You can make the post profitable—that is enough! But you may say what you like, Countess, you were created for a restless life; and

it would be ridiculous to wish Cæsar a peaceful existence as second citizen in Rome! "

Her existence was not long a peaceful one, for she took a fancy to a young Italian adventurer who decamped with her jewels. The affair became so widely known that Isabella dismissed the mother as she had the daughter, and gave her to understand that it would be better for both of them if they left the capital of Spain.

Both mother and daughter were zealous Catholics, and looked to the Church for consolation in their sorrows. This was especially the case with Eugénie, who, tired of worldly pleasures, disgusted with slander and deceit, craved for a new ideal, which religion seemed to promise her.

" It is recorded," says Clara Tschudi, " that when Eugénie entered the convent to take her vows, an aged nun came towards her, stood still, looked at her with a vacant expression, and suddenly exclaimed: ' My daughter! do not seek for rest within our walls. You are destined to adorn a throne.' "

These words seemed prophetic both to Eugénie and her mother, and instead of giving her life to the poor, the desolate and the sick, the young girl re-entered the world.

The prophetic element apparently played an important part in Eugénie's life. When she was about to become Empress, Paul Ginistry wrote an interesting article, from which the following story is worthy of being re-printed.

" One day—Eugénie was then thirteen years old and had boyish manners—she was forbidden, I

do not know why, to ride, of which exercise she was very fond. During her pet she amused herself by sliding down the banisters and, falling, stunned herself. The door of the house was open, an old gipsy woman passed by in the street, and noticed the unconscious girl before the servants did. She came to her, and helped her to recover. Eugénie opened her eyes and smiled.

" While they were thanking the kind-hearted woman for her help, she looked attentively at the child's charming face. ' The *senorita*,' she said in a prophetic manner, ' was born under the sky; on the evening of a battle.'

" The Countess de Montijo was struck by those words. It was true that one day, at Granada, an earthquake had obliged her to camp in the garden, and the shock which she had experienced had precipitated her daughter's birth. She took Eugénie's hand and asked the woman to tell her what the child's future would be. The gipsy examined the dainty hand, and, following the lines on it with her brown fingers, answered gravely : ' There is a fairy-tale here. She will be queen.' "

When Eugénie was in Cognac, a priest named Bodinet also foretold her that she would become an Empress.

There is still another prophecy, made by a gipsy, who told her that her happiness would bloom with the violets—the emblem of the Bonaparte family.

This made her so fond of violets that she was rarely seen without a bunch of them, either fixed in her hair or fastened to her waistband. When the summer came and violets became rare, a

shepherd was employed to bring them from the heights of the Sierra Nevada. On the day of her fête, the house was always filled with violets, for all her friends, knowing her fancy, would all send her presents of them.

## CHAPTER III

### HER MEETING WITH NAPOLEON

WHEN the Countess de Montijo left Spain with her daughters, they led a very gay life in the fashionable watering places during the summer, and in the capitals during the winter.

In 1849 they were in Germany, and when, in 1864, Eugénie—then Empress of the French—was drinking the waters at Schwalbach, the Duke of Nassau reminded her of her earlier visit by showing her a register in which her name was inscribed.

In 1851 they found themselves in England; it was then that the Earl of Malmesbury met them at Lady Palmerston's At Home. During this visit, they were invited to the State Ball at Buckingham Palace on June 13th.

While in Bordeaux, they were entertained by the Marquis de Dampierre. When they came to Paris, their cousin, Count de Lesseps, father of Ferdinand, introduced them to several Legitimist and Orléanist families. Despite this, and though Parisians are always glad to receive well-born foreigners, certain doors were never opened to the

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

Montijos. Mme. de la Ferronnays refers to this in her Memoirs in the following manner:

"Mlle. de Montijo's position in Paris is distinctly doubtful. Her free manners, which one often finds in women of the South, coupled with a certain lack of social support, were the cause of her not being admitted into the best society. She fell into that category of foreigners who are entertained by the men, but who are avoided by the women of the *grand monde*. They were invited to the rustic dinners and luncheons given by the Vicomte de la Rochefoucauld at La Vallée-aux-Loups, but they were not received on the day when the Countess Sosthènes, *née* de Polignac, did the honours to a more select society."

By her beauty, her relentless coquetry and splendid *toilettes* Eugénie created more admirers whenever she appeared, and several *grands seigneurs* asked for her hand, but she kept her heart and senses under control, and, having an intuition that she would find someone still better, she preferred to wait.

Certainly she provoked most of the slander which surrounded her name, but there is nothing to show that her conduct was anything more than extravagant and imprudent, and we have no cause to doubt her reply to Napoleon, when he mentioned some of the stories circulated about her: "I have been in love with others, but I have always remained Mademoiselle de Montijo."

The author of *L'Impératrice Eugénie* affirms that she was once in love with Prince Jérôme Bonaparte, and that this love was the source of their

reciprocal animosity and even hatred in after life, when the Spanish girl had preferred to satisfy her ambition by choosing the Emperor, rather than her heart by becoming the wife of his cousin. This story, however, needs to be proved. For the time being its authenticity rests on Irénée Mauget's assertion that "a friend of Prince Jérôme" was responsible for it.

There is not even the slightest suggestion in any of the contemporary Memoirs that Eugénie was in love with Jérôme. The Count de Vieil-Castel, who knew more than most people about the Empress of the French, only says: "Prince Jérôme is in great favour, and visits her in the morning; nobody knows the reason for this *rapprochement.*"

There has been much speculation among the various writers on Eugénie as to the circumstances under which she first saw her future husband. Imbert de Saint-Armand says:

"The first time that they caught sight of the future Emperor was after the Strasburg affair of 1836, when, being in Paris, they happened to call at the Préfecture de Police to see the Prefect's wife, Mme. Delessert, a Spaniard by birth and a family friend, on which occasion they saw the Prince passing in the custody of several policemen."

Irénée Mauget gives a similar account: "One day the Countess de Montijo and her daughters called on Mme. Delessert, the Prefect's wife, who lived at the Préfecture. This call coincided with Louis Bonaparte's arrest after the Strasburg affair.

Mme. Delessert placed the Montijos at a window from which they could see the Prince escorted by an officer of the *gendarmerie*."

Mme. Carette, who was reader to the Empress for several years, and, consequently, should know her history well, says :

" Prior to her marriage, the Empress left Spain every year, and, accompanied by her mother, the Countess de Montijo, paid a visit of some months to friends either in France or England.

" It was on the occasion of one of these trips, in 1852, that the Emperor, then President of the Republic, met his future wife for the first time, at a ball in the Elysée.

" The great beauty of the young Countess de Téba, and her brilliant and superior wit, made a deep impression on the Prince-President; from that time every other feminine influence was eradicated from his mind, and he grew to love this one woman sincerely and completely."

Clara Tschudi's version is more romantic :

" It is reported that Eugénie met Louis Napoleon at a watering-place in her early youth, and that even then the Prince felt himself drawn to the Spanish Countess, who—still half a child—came towards him with a wreath of violets in her hair. But it is far more certain that they met later on, during a residence in London, 1847-48, shortly after the mother and daughter had left the Court and Madrid."

Some historians say that Louis Napoleon proposed to her about this time, and Dr. Max Ring,

in his *Die Napoleoniden und die Frauen,* quotes the following letter from Eugénie to Napoleon:

"You wish to go to Paris. You long for the possession of power, to become Consul, President, possibly Dictator. Suppose you attain the first of these aims, will that satisfy you? Will it appease your ambition? Will you not aspire still higher? Undoubtedly you will. Then, how burdensome would a wife be to you! If, as you wish, you become Emperor, the place for an Empress must be kept vacant. But if you are unfortunate in your plans, if events do not turn out according to your wishes, if France does not offer you what you ask from her, then come back—but only then—and I will give you your answer. Remember that my heart beats strong enough to make up to you for all sorrows, all disappointed hopes."

Filon says that "the Prince-President's passion began in 1849, but in circumstances that do not throw the proper light on the characters and the situation."

Others affirm that it was at a ball given by Princess Mathilde that the first meeting took place. Then, the author of *L'Impératrice Eugénie* says emphatically:

"It was neither at the Elysée, nor at the Princess's, but at a review at the camp of Satory. Eugénie then lived in the rue de l'Orangerie at Versailles. She attended the review on horseback, and the Prince-President at once noticed this beautiful *amazone*, so full of proud grace. It was a thunderbolt. From that day, having learned about her family, he tried hard to meet her. Eventually

he did so through Princess Mathilde, who said indifferently, speaking of her: 'She is a newcomer . . . . an Andalusian woman.' The Countess de Montijo and her daughter were invited to a ball at the Elysée. The Prince-President entertained Eugénie a long time; he was attracted by her and showed it; she was amiable and a little coquettish. . . . . The idyll had begun."

The Prince-President was captivated by Eugénie's charming profile, by her golden hair, and by her wondrously white shoulders.

As to her feelings, the Count de Vieil-Castel says:

"Mlle. de Montijo is very charming and she is not lacking in *esprit*, but she will never be carried away either by her heart or her senses, for she is strong-minded. I do not believe that she has fallen to the conqueror. They say that Mlle. de Montijo has a chance of becoming Empress of the French. Why not? We live in a century of extraordinary events!"

## CHAPTER IV

### NAPOLEON III

IN 1829, while in Rome, the Earl of Malmesbury wrote in his Memoirs :

"Here for the first time I met Hortense's son Louis Napoleon, then just of age. Nor would anybody at that time have predicted his great and romantic career. He was a wild, harum-scarum youth, or what the French call *un crâne*, riding at full gallop down the streets to the peril of the public, fencing and pistol-shooting, and apparently without serious thoughts of any kind, although even then he was possessed with the conviction that he would some day rule over France. We became friends, but at that time he evinced no remarkable talent or any fixed idea but the one mentioned."

The Marquise de Taisey-Chatenoy, *née* de Chauffailles-Gengoux, who has left an interesting and very personal book entitled *A la Cour de Napoléon III.*, said of Napoleon :

"The Emperor seemed to me small; he had square shoulders, and walked with the head a little

inclined and moving his whole body slightly. His heavy eyelids covered his eyes. . . . His voice was low and dull. He often took long walks with a companion, to whom he would not address a word for hours; he entered within himself and seemed pleased with that interior solitude . . . he never disclosed the secret of his thoughts either by word or gesture."

The enlightened and honest Count de Vieil-Castel characterises him thus:

"The Prince Napoleon does not doubt his fortune; he is always calm and certain of his future. He knows men and generally despises them. He dissembles and communicates his plans to no one. . . . In all he proposes to do or does, he shows an immoveable will and does not take into account any obstacles; he would break them without emotion.

"His suave and deep smile, his vague and veiled look, indicate a man who would rather talk with himself than with those who are round him, and who hears better the interior voice of his thoughts than the voices of those who give him advice."

In another place: "He is not communicative; he remains, so to say, days without speaking; he resembles the patient divinity. Calm and deeply dissembling, even towards those who are most intimate with him, his soul, like his face, is of marble. He does not respect men enough to raise them to the dignity of confidants."

Such is the portrait, both physical and psychological, of Napoleon III., who was laughed at after the unfortunate Strasburg affair.

On August 4, 1839, the Earl of Malmesbury wrote in his diary :

" I am just returned from Lord Eglinton's Grand Tournament, given at his castle in Ayrshire. Nothing equal to it had occurred for many years. The principal knights who performed in the lists were Prince Louis Napoleon, now in exile, and his faithful squire Persigny, Lord Waterford and his brothers, Mr. Gilmour, the celebrated horseman, and Lord Eglinton himself, in a cuirass inlaid with gold."

The French press ridiculed Napoleon, but Louis Philippe's government were afraid of him, and as they did not hesitate to employ even the basest means to get rid of Louis Napoleon, they sent to England a low hireling by the name of Count Léon, who is mentioned in the Earl of Malmesbury's Memoirs under the date of March 3, 1840 :

" . . . A duel with Count Léon, who was sent over by the French police, either to get rid of him or to get him expelled from this country by inducing him to infringe the law. This villainous project was defeated by the interposition of our police, who took all the parties before a magistrate, and they were bound over to keep the peace for a year under a penalty of £3,500. Count d'Orsay was to have been second to the Prince."

On August 7, 1840, the diplomatist-Earl again wrote about the undaunted Imperial schemer :

" He was standing (two evenings ago) on the steps of Lady Blessington's house after a party, wrapped up in a cloak, with Persigny by him, and I observed to them : ' You look like two conspira-

tors.' Upon which he answered: 'You may be nearer right than you think.' "

Napoleon III., so it appears, went straight from Lady Blessington's party to Boulogne with fifty followers shouting: "*Vive l'Empereur!*" This time, again, Louis Napoleon's plot fell through, owing to the sudden illness of the officer of the day, who was to have surrendered the barracks at once to the conspirators. The soldiers had mostly been gained, and as the prestige of his name in the French army was universal, success was confidently expected.

Arrested, the future Emperor was imprisoned at the Château de Ham, where Lord Malmesbury visited him. Of this visit the Earl wrote in April, 1845:

"I am just returned from the Castle of Ham, on the Somme, where I have been to see Prince Louis Napoleon. I went to Ham on April 20. I found the Prince little changed, although he had been imprisoned five years, and very much pleased to see an old friend fresh from the outer world and that world London.

"He stated that a deputation had arrived from Ecuador offering him the Presidency of that Republic if Louis Philippe would release him, and in that case he would give the King his parole never to return to Europe.

"He had therefore sent for me as a supporter and friend of Sir Robert Peel, at that time our Prime Minister, to urge Sir Robert to intercede with Louis Philippe to comply with his wishes,

promising every possible guarantee for his good faith.

" As a precedent for English official interference I was to quote Earl Grey's in favour of Prince de Polignac's release in 1830.

" I assured the Prince that I would do my best, but added that Lord Aberdeen was our Foreign Secretary, and that there was nothing romantic in his character.

" After a stay of three hours I left the prison and returned to London deeply impressed with the calm resolution, or rather philosophy of this man. Very few in a miserable prison like this, isolated and quasi-forgotten, would have kept their intellect braced by constant day studies and original compositions, as did Louis Napoleon during the last years in the fortress of Ham.

" The day after I arrived in London I saw Sir Robert Peel and related my interview and message to him. He seemed to be greatly interested, and certainly not averse to applying to the French Government in the Prince's favour on his conditions, but said he must consult Lord Aberdeen, our Foreign Secretary, which, of course, was inevitable. That evening he wrote to me to say that Lord Aberdeen ' would not hear of it.' "

In May, 1846, Louis Napoleon escaped from the Château de Ham and came to London. While on his way to the Brunswick Hotel in Jermyn Street, he met Lord Malmesbury, who that night was dining with the Duke of Beaufort. At Hamilton House, Lord Malmesbury saw Louis de Noailles,

who was then Attaché of the French Embassy, and said to the French diplomatist :

" Have you seen him? "

" Who? "

" Louis Napoleon; he is in London. He has just escaped."

Louis de Noailles dropped the lady who was on his arm, was out of the room in a single jump, and rushed to tell his Ambassador the amazing news.

Louis Napoleon settled, for the time being, in London, where he lived in King Street, St. James's, and waited for the realisation of his " fixed notion, which nothing could eradicate, that he would some day govern France."

In the riots of 1848, " among the special constables stationed round Trafalgar Square, Prince Napoleon was on duty," like any Englishman.

On the news of the February Revolution and the flight of Louis Philippe, Louis Napoleon hastened to Paris. The Parisians elected him their representative with 84,420 votes, and after an exile of thirty years, he took his seat in the National Assembly. On December 20, 1848, he was proclaimed President of the French Republic by a *plébiscite*. His name had acted like magic on the nation.

In 1852 he was elected President for ten years, and when eight million Frenchmen recorded their wish for the restoration of the dynasty, the Senate and the Legislative Assembly did homage to him at Saint Cloud on December 1st, of the same year.

Under the date of December 29, 1852, Lord

Malmesbury wrote the following very interesting story :

" Lord Cowley relates a curious anecdote as to the origin of the numeral III. in the Emperor's title. The Prefect of Bourges, where he slept the first night of his progress, had given instructions that the people were to shout ' *Vive Napoléon!* ' but he wrote ' *Vive Napoléon!!!* ' The people took the three notes of interjection as a numeral. The President, on hearing it, sent the Duke de Mortemart to the Prefect to know what the cry meant. When the whole thing was explained, the President said : ' I did not know that I had a Prefect-Machiavelli.' "

In another place, Lord Malmesbury writes :

" Heard from Lord Cowley that Louis Napoleon had sent for him and stated that he did not consider his empire hereditary retrospectively, for the following reasons :

" 1st. If he did, he would have called himself Napoleon V., because both his elder uncle Joseph and his father Louis outlived the Duke of Reichstadt.

" 2nd. Because, if he had considered himself hereditary, he would not have required an election.

" 3rd. That, if hereditary, he would have dated his reign from his cousin's or father's death."

The already-mentioned Norwegian writer, Clara Tschudi, wrote :

" Eugénie and her mother had left London about the same time as Napoleon. They spent the summer of 1849 at Spa ; the winter following they were in Brussels, and even in Madrid."

It is difficult to verify this assertion, as also the story that Mlle. de Montijo offered her whole fortune to the Prince-President on December 2nd, viz., the date of the *coup-d'état* through which Louis Napoleon effected the greatest political stroke of modern times.

The idyll, begun at Versailles and the Elysée, was continued at Compiègne. Mme. Carette says :

" Prince Louis-Napoleon knew full well that display and luxury give a prestige necessary for the exercise of power. He had organised a kind of court, with the military element as its basis, and had assembled around him those who had been scattered by the revolutionary agitation of the past few years. And, as at the Elysée, where the President had introduced, alongside of French elegance and taste, the comfort of English habits, the Palace of Compiègne, in the hunting season, resounded with new life."

Napoleon III. went to Compiègne in state. The Bishop of Beauvais received him at the door of the church of Saint-Jacques, and said to him : " Your Majesty wishes to bend your head before the King of Kings, under whose sway are all empires." He answered : " Monseigneur, it is my duty to pray for help for the fulfilment of my mission in this world ; it is through the alleviation of the sorrows of those who suffer that we reach that purpose."

The nephew of the *petit caporal* was saluted in the square of the Castle by a detachment of *grognards* of the First Empire. They were commanded by Sezille, the vicar, who had served under

Napoleon I., taken part in nine battles and been wounded several times. In the Castle, Napoleon lived in the apartment originally occupied by Napoleon I.

Among other guests received by the Emperor in the *Salon des Cartes* were: Princess Mathilde, Prince Murat, the Duc de Mouchy, the Count and Countess de Persigny, the Marquise de Contades, Marshal de Saint-Arnaud . . . and Countess de Montijo with her daughter. On the following day—Sunday—Napoleon attended Mass in the chapel of the Castle; the Countess de Montijo and Eugénie were beside him.

One reads in *Louis-Napoléon et Mlle. de Montijo,* by Imbert de Saint-Amand:

"Over the altar was a stained-glass window representing a woman clad in purple and holding a book on which one could read the word *ama*—love—; the woman clasped the hand of a young man in red, holding a cross and looking heavenward. The future Empress looked constantly at the window, of which the motto *Ama* seemed to be for her an exhortation to love the sovereign who was to give her such a great proof of his love."

They hunted on the Monday, and in an account of the meet, one reads of Eugénie:

"The lovely Spaniard wore an elegant habit, and rode a thoroughbred Andalusian given to her by Baron Rothschild. Her dainty figure was well-defined by a closely-buttoned habit; the skirt was long and wide, over grey breeches. With one of her tiny gloved hands she held the reins, while she used the other to urge on her excited horse with the

help of a little riding-whip, the handle of which was set with pearls. She wore patent leather boots with high heels and spurs. She sat her horse like a knight, and despised the saddle ordinarily used by ladies. Her long plaits were arranged under a dainty felt hat from which waved a magnificent long ostrich feather fastened by a diamond clasp. Her sparkling eyes shone like stars, and the bewitching smile that played round her lips displayed the whiteness of her teeth."

The correspondent of the *Indépendance Belge* wrote to his paper from Paris :

" One of my friends, who spent last season in the Pyrenees, at Eaux-Bonnes, was for a fortnight at the same hotel as Mlle. Eugénie de Montijo. This friend was then able to study the future Empress dispassionately, before the glamour of Imperial rank surrounded her. She is a very pretty and even very beautiful woman, who will hold her own well.

" Mlle. de Montijo's hair is fair, with a reddish tinge ; her mouth is magnificently furnished ; her eyebrows arched, and a little raised ; she has beautiful and wide shoulders, very white, and all the most distinguished characteristics of a woman of high rank. Her education is English. She rides both daringly and gracefully. While she was at Eaux-Bonnes she was very much admired. Many of her characteristics show a great nobleness. Like all creoles—the Empress Josephine being the most distinguished example—she possesses charm and spontaneity . . . one might add, the capriciousness of a child."

On December 24, the Marquise de Contades—

subsequently Countess de Beaulaincourt—wrote to her father, Marshal de Castellane :

" Affairs follow their course at Compiègne. The Home Secretary, M. de Persigny, and his wife, a daughter of Prince de la Moskowa, are still in love with each other. At the *hallali* the other day, Mme. de Persigny began to sob ; M. de Persigny kissed her. It seems that they continued this exercise while riding their respective horses home ; then they went to their room and did not come down for dinner. People thought their behaviour *un peu léger*. As to the Emperor, he continues to be greatly fascinated by Mlle. de Montijo."

The Countess von Hatzfeld, Marshal de Castellane's other daughter, wife of the Prussian Ambassador at Paris, wrote to her father : " Everybody in the town is talking of the Emperor's marriage with Mlle. de Montijo ; this report needs confirmation. If it is true, he will at least have a beautiful wife, and that is something."

The Marshal answered : " For my part, I am glad of it. But I hardly suspected such a future when Madame her mother came to me at Perpignan on July 29, 1834, leading her and her sister by the hand. The Countess de Montijo was then fleeing from Spain, and I gave her letters of introduction to our relatives in Toulouse. I find her described in my notes of the period as between thirty and thirty-five years of age, tall, still fine-looking, and with a remarkable mind. Mme. de Montijo was very kind when I saw her again in 1849, with her daughter Eugénie. In Mlle. de Montijo the Emperor will have a very beautiful, very intelligent,

and, I think, a very good wife. Mme. de Montijo will have realized a fine dream."

M. de Maupas has left us a charming story concerning Napoleon's morning walks in the forest of Compiègne and his courting of Eugénie.

"The lawns were covered with abundant dew, and the rays of the sun gave the little drops with which the grass was covered the glitter and transparency of diamonds. Mlle. Eugénie de Montijo, who is very poetic, did not cease to admire the capricious and magic effects of the light. She had particularly noticed a clover-leaf covered with drops of dew, which sparkled like a veritable jewel.

"After the walk, the Emperor took aside Count Bacciochi, who, a few moments later, left for Paris. The next day he brought back with him a magnificent jewel representing a clover, each leaf of which was adorned with a splendid diamond, imitating the drops of dew. The Count and his jeweller had very cleverly imitated the object of the future sovereign's admiration."

The same evening, the Emperor organised a raffle for the jewel, and, of course, Dame Chance was so efficaciously aided that she determined Eugénie should become its possessor.

When Napoleon III. became betrothed to Mlle. de Montijo, writes Mme. Carette, he said to her: "We are on the eve of great events, and I do not wish you to encounter the same dangers as myself. Return, then, to Spain, and, as soon as our lot is settled, we will meet again. Fortune will smile on me because it will guide me to your presence."

Mlle. de Montijo replied: "Come what may, I

will be your wife. If you are not as successful as you anticipate, come to my country, where we shall enjoy independence and perhaps be happier than on a throne."

The idyll continued.

## CHAPTER V

### THE COURTSHIP

ON January 12, 1853, the grand balls of the Second Empire were inaugurated at the new-restored Tuileries.

"The ball opened with a quadrille of honour," says Imbert de Saint-Amand, "which Napoleon danced with the British Ambassadress, Lady Cowley. He danced another quadrille with Mlle. de Montijo, whose resplendent beauty and extreme elegance excited general admiration. Of all the women present she was assuredly the most beautiful."

People did not begin talking of the Emperor's marriage until after the Tuileries ball. On January 16, 1853, the Marquise de Contades wrote to her father, Marshal de Castellane:

"You must hear, even so far away, some echo of the rumours current in Paris, where nothing is talked of but a marriage between the Emperor and Mlle. de Montijo. Between ourselves, that might very well happen. The Emperor has conceived a very violent passion for her, and he seems to me to take the thing quite in earnest.

"As for her, she conducts herself with reserve and dignity. From the political point of view this marriage seems at first glance to have inconveniences; but if it does not take place, it is more than probable that the Emperor will never marry. His repugnance to marriage up to now has been only too well proved, and certain old English chains, which are still very near, and which are the terror of those who love him, may restrain him.

"This young girl is pretty, good and witty, and with this I believe she has much energy and nobility of soul. I have been watching her a good deal of late, and I have observed nothing but what is good."

Notwithstanding such flattering opinions as these, the idea of Napoleon making Eugénie his consort was far from meeting with universal favour. In the first place, the Emperor's supporters and friends were anxious for him to strengthen his throne by an alliance with a princess of royal blood. Furthermore, no matter how strong democratic ideas may be in France, the French dislike *les reines-parvenues*. The idea of an Empress whom one could have elbowed at one's dressmaker's or on the boulevards hurt the national vanity.

Napoleon's friends plotted for Mlle. de Montijo to become an Empress in everything but name, hoping that in that manner his passion would be assuaged and politically disastrous consequences avoided.

This design was frustrated by Eugénie's resistance. When the Emperor asked her petu-

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

*(From the Collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.)*

lantly : What is then the road to your heart? " her answer was : " That of the chapel, Sire."

Mme. Carette, referring to this, defends her mistress in the following manner :

" It was then stated, and has since been repeated, that shrewdness and skill had a large share in deciding the Emperor on marriage, and that it was the well-calculated discretion of the young Countess de Téba which triumphed over the doubts of the smitten sovereign. These stories were undoubtedly circulated by certain persons whose motives were solely selfish and sordid, and who had no scruples when it was a question of satisfying their caprices and ambitions."

Another contemporary, the well-informed Count de Vieil-Castel, wrote :

" Mlle. de Montijo, by whom the Emperor has been much fascinated for the past two years, has steered her craft with intelligence and the most amazing diplomacy imaginable. She first brought the Emperor to the point of himself speaking of matrimony first, and then said to him : ' You must write yourself to my mother, who, loving both of us as she does, and appreciating the distance that separates us, will probably be tempted to decline.

" The Emperor wrote, and the letter still remains in the Montijos' archives, as a proof that the offer was made by the Emperor, and that the mother's resistance had to be overcome before the marriage was allowed. Well played! . . . In the meantime, Parisian tongues gossip and invent all kinds of stories and calumnies."

At a moment when the Countess de Montijo's shrewdness and skill had almost triumphed, she wrote to the Marquis de la Rochelambert, whose three daughters later became the Empress' maids-of-honour, as follows :

" I am not sure whether I should rejoice or weep. How many mothers there are who envy me, and who, seeing my eyes filled with tears, are not able to understand me. Eugénie is to be Queen in your country of France, and I cannot help thinking that Queens are not very happy. The memory of Marie-Antoinette obsesses me, and I am asking myself whether my daughter's lot will not be a similar one."

There were a great many people dissatisfied with the news of the Emperor's betrothal. The Count de Vieil-Castel wrote :

" Last night at Princess Mathilde's, where a numerous company was assembled, everybody was commenting on the news. There were those who approved the Emperor's move. As to the women, many of them were very bitter at the thought of being obliged to call Mlle. de Montijo ' Your Majesty.' "

Then in another place :

" Many ambitious women are torn between their wish to be somebody at the new Court and their annoyance at having to do homage to an Empress who was their companion of yesterday. The Legitimists utter endless jibes."

The Emperor's relations opposed the alliance. His uncle, the ex-king Jérôme, did all he could to induce him to forget Eugénie ; Princess Mathilde

implored him to abandon the unsuitable union. All joined in advising him to marry a French lady of noble birth. In order to divert his attention from the Spaniard, they suggested an alliance with the Princess Czartoryska—the Czartoryskis being descendants of a ruling sovereign of Lithuania.

Wishing to end the doubts harassing him, Napoleon asked an intelligent lady : " Which of the two shall I choose—Mlle. de Montijo or the Princess Czartoryska? " " Sire, if the choice were left to me," was the answer, " I would prefer the Cachucha to the Mazurka."

On the evening of New Year's Day, 1852, Eugénie, who was among the guests, placed herself with Colonel de Toulongeon, on whose arm she was leaning, before the wife of a general. The lady became so wrathful at this that she expressed her displeasure loudly, using slighting terms in speaking of Mlle. de Montijo. The latter rushed to the Emperor, and complained to him in a passionate Spanish manner.

" I will avenge you," replied Napoleon, and the next day he asked the Countess de Montijo for her daughter's hand. She was then living at No. 12, Place Vendôme.

While the Court was at Compiègne, Eugénie, now sure of herself, because of the Emperor's proposal, preceded a *grande dame* who also made a discourteous remark about her. Again Eugénie was obliged to appeal to the Emperor. A few moments after, when they found themselves in the park, Napoleon made a wreath, put it on Eugénie's head and said loudly : " While waiting for the crown ! "

The following article, taken from the *Indépendance Belge*, may be looked upon as characteristic of the opinion of the French press :

" It is not the kind of alliance which those who support the Emperor, his servants, and personal friends have wished. A diplomatic union might have been of some utility to the State ; a union with a French lady would have been agreeable to the people. By such marriages the Emperor would either have entered the family of a sovereign with dignity and splendour, or, as it were, by an appeal to the nation, he would a second time have solemnly ratified his connection with the people.

" On the other hand a union with a Spanish lady meets with no sympathy from the nation, and can only be the result of personal gratification. The head of a great State like France, anxious to found a new dynasty, should entertain more serious thoughts and higher aims than to satisfy a whim and succumb to a young woman's beauty."

The Emperor was obliged to listen to the reproaches of his friends and advisers, who, from the dynastic point of view, were right, but he silenced them by saying in the most determined manner : " Gentlemen, enough of your remonstrances ; this marriage I have decided upon, and it will be accomplished ! "

When the union was announced, the Count de Vieil-Castel wrote :

" This marriage is making a devilish uproar. Yesterday there was a fall of two francs on Exchange. The old parties woke up to shout ' Shocking ! ' talk of the national honour being

compromised, and slander Mlle. de Montijo in the most abominable manner. The Faubourg Saint-Germain is scandalized; the Emperor says nothing, and goes his own way."

A simple-minded young Spanish girl, having heard of Eugénie's betrothal, exclaimed naively: "I must go to Paris; there is no future in Spain for a young girl like myself." "Had I resisted Bonaparte, I had become Empress," said a witty woman.

That little man, Thiers, kept repeating in his thin voice to everybody he met: "The Emperor always seemed to me *un homme d'esprit*. To-day I see that he is far-seeing; through his marriage he reserves for himself a Spanish grandeeship in the future." Then he would add: "There is nothing to fear from people when they are a little tipsy, but they are dangerous when they are completely drunk."

Only three persons were thoroughly pleased: the Emperor, Eugénie and her mother. "She has intellect enough for two and courage enough for three," observed Napoleon of his fiancée.

At the beginning there were but very few who flattered Napoleon's passion for the beautiful girl, and in that way secured his favour. An obscure little poet by the name of Villain de Saint-Hilaire wrote a poem about the imperial wedding and presented it to the Emperor.

"It is the first homage," said Napoleon, "that Mlle. de Montijo has received. I am deeply touched by this, and I shall never forget it." Then, handing a scarf-pin to the rhymer: "Accept

this pin; its only value is the fact that I have had it for a long time."

The sculptor Nieuwerkerke begged Napoleon for the favour of a visit to his studio, and while the ruler inspected some of his works, the artist suddenly uncovered a little bust of Mlle. de Montijo. Bonaparte was delighted, and soon afterwards Nieuwerkerke was appointed Director of the Louvre.

Dupin and Lamartine approved of the marriage. Lamartine, always ready to strike a pathetic note, exclaimed: "The Emperor has just realised the most beautiful dream possible to a man: to raise the woman he loves above all other women."

Dupin was less poetical when he said: "The Emperor did well to marry the woman he loved, and not to haggle for some scrofulous German princess with feet as big as my own. At least when he embraces his wife he will do so as a pleasure, and not as a duty."

In the immediate surrounding of the Emperor, those who favoured his union with Eugénie were: Count de Morny; Lieutenant Colonel Fleury, orderly officer of the Emperor; Colonel de Toulongeon, another orderly; Fould, minister of the Imperial Household; then Saint-Arnaud and Edgar Nay.

From among those who opposed the marriage the following names should be mentioned: Count Walewski; Count de Persigny, Home Secretary; Drouyn de Lhuys, Foreign Secretary; Abbatuci, Keeper of the Seals; Fortoul, Minister of Public Instruction; Bineau, Minister of Finance; Trop-

long, President of the Senate; and by far the greater part of the administration.

However, when it became known that nothing would alter Napoleon's resolve, all changed their attitude, and those who had been most irate became most adulatory.

On January 10, the Marquise de Contades wrote to her father, Marshal de Castellane :

" There has been a ball given by Her Imperial Highness Princess Mathilde. About three o'clock in the morning, thirty of us remained for supper, and we were very gay. Morny was there, as well as the Countess de Montijo and her daughter. The Emperor was very assiduous in his attentions to that beautiful person. For more than one hour they were engaged in an intimate conversation which nobody dared disturb.

" Mlle. de Montijo carries her favour with decency and good grace; her mother and she hope that there will be a wedding, and all their diplomacy is directed to the achievement of that hope. People court Mlle. de Montijo; they recommend themselves to her, and ask her to speak to the Emperor for them. Cabinet Ministers flatter her, and she is the rising sun of every *fête*."

The newspapers spoke of her continually, and recorded all her movements. Here are some examples of their complimentary attention :

" Yesterday and to-day, the Countess de Téba, accompanied by the Countess de Montijo, her mother, visited several shops in the boulevards and the rue Vivienne."

" When the future Empress was recognised, she

was loudly cheered. Her simple and distinguished manner, her benevolent attitude towards some poor women who found themselves in her road, won for her all hearts."

When the Countess de Montijo and her daughter appeared in their box at the Opera, nobody listened to the music or looked at the prima donnas; all eyes turned with admiration towards the beautiful Spaniard.

The English newspapers were unanimous in their approval of the Emperor's choice, and declared his example an excellent one to imitate.

*The Morning Post* said: "Romance has carried the day against policy. . . . There is a tinge of independence in this which cannot fail to please the French nation."

*The Times* had the following paragraph: "We shall speak of the future Empress of the French with all the deference due to her, for it is impossible to have remarked the attractions of her person, the distinction of her manner and the vivacity of her mind, without taking a more than ordinary interest in her extraordinary beauty."

Napoleon beamed with joy, especially when he received one of Eugénie's love-letters, written in a beautifully clear style and full of *verve*. Unfortunately it is proved beyond doubt that those wonderful letters were dictated to her by that subtle littérateur, Mérimée!

On January 20, 1853, Eugénie de Montijo wrote to the Queen of Spain, acquainting her with the extraordinary lot which Fortune had bestowed upon her. It is not necessary to add that in her

message she could not conceal the satisfaction to her *amour-propre*.

The Queen of Spain answered in the following manner: "I received thy letter of the 20th with the greatest pleasure. The strange destiny which Providence has given thee fills me with satisfaction. Thou canst count on my permission to a union which is glorious to thee!"

In order to make the *mésalliance* seem less, the Montijos' old friend Mérimée was asked to make researches and find all the long-forgotten titles ever borne by a member of the house. He fulfilled the task so well that the marriage contract contained almost a whole page of pompous Spanish names.

On January 22, the Emperor announced his marriage to the Council of State, the Senate, and the Legislative Assembly in such peculiar terms that it is worth while to read this highly curious document *in extenso*.

"Gentlemen!

"In announcing to you my marriage, I am fulfilling a wish many times expressed by the nation. This union is not in accordance with old political traditions; but it is advantageous for that very reason. (Sensation.)

"Successive revolutions have isolated France from other European countries; every intelligent government should endeavour to bring her within the pale of the old monarchies; but this result will be better secured by an honest and upright policy and by a faithful fulfilment of engagements, than by royal alliances, which give false securities, and

often place personal interests before those of the nation. (Applause.)

" Moreover, the examples of the past have filled the minds of the people with superstitious beliefs; they have not forgotten that in the course of the last seventy years foreign princesses have ascended the throne only to see their offspring scattered and exiled by war or revolution. (Great sensation.) One woman alone appears to have brought happiness, and to live in the memory of the nation. That woman, the modest and virtuous wife of General Bonaparte, was not of royal blood. (Applause, and shouts of *Vive l'Empéreur!*)

" It must, however, be acknowledged that the marriage of Napoleon I. with Marie-Louise, in 1810, was a great event; it was a guarantee for the future, and it satisfied our national pride, because the illustrious and ancient House of Austria, with whom we had for a long time waged war, sought an alliance with the chief elected by a new Empire. On the other hand, during the last reign, the *amour-propre* of the nation was hurt when the heir-apparent of the late King for several years sought in vain an alliance with a royal house, and at last obtained the hand of a princess who was undoubtedly accomplished, but only of secondary rank, and of a different creed.

" When, in the very face of Old Europe, one soars on the wings of a new principle to the heights of ancient dynasties, it is not by making ancient one's coat of arms and by endeavouring to become allied to royal families *à tout prix*, that one is accepted. It is rather by always calling to one's

mind one's origin, by preserving one's character, and by boldly assuming before Europe the position of a *parvenu**—a glorious title when won by the free vote of a great people—that one would succeed. (Loud applause.)

" Thus, being obliged to lay aside the precedents followed until now by crowned heads, my marriage became a purely personal matter. There only remained the choice of the person. She who has become the object of my preference is of noble birth. She is French in heart, in education, and because her father shed his blood for the Empire; and, being a Spaniard, she has this advantage, that she has no family on the members of which it would be necessary to lavish honours and dignities.

" Endowed with all the great qualities of the soul, she will be an ornament to the throne, and, in the hour of danger, one of its fearless supporters. As a devout Catholic, she will send up to Heaven the same prayers as myself on behalf of the prosperity of France; and I have every hope that her Court will be as renowned for its virtues as was that of the Empress Josephine. (Prolonged applause and shouts of *Vive l'Empéreur! Vive l'Impératrice!*)

" Gentlemen, what I wish to say to France is this: I have preferred a woman whom I love and respect to one whose alliance might have brought advantages mingled with self-sacrifice. Although

* He was right there, for according to the *Almanack de la Republique* Louis Napoleon born in 1808 was not the son of Louis, King of Holland, but of a Dutch Admiral Vertinel and of Queen Hortence. However, in compliance with the wish of his brother, Napoleon I, King Louis allowed the boy to be baptised under the name of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, paternity according to French law being proved *par l'acte de naissance.*

despising the opinion of no one, I yield to my inclinations, though not before consulting my reason and convictions.

" Thus, by placing independence, the dictates of the heart and the welfare of family above dynastic prejudices and ambitious aspirations, I shall not be weaker, being more free. (Enthusiastic applause.)

" On my way to Notre-Dame I will present the Empress to the people and to the army; the confidence they place in me insures their sympathy for her whom I have chosen. And, Gentlemen, when you have become acquainted with her, you will then be convinced that in my choice I have been inspired by Providence." (Long applause and loud cheers.)

After this, Eugénie was sure that her ambition would not be frustrated, and her mother " realised a fine dream," as Marshal de Castellane put it.

However, the Emperor's speech did not please democratic France, and strong indignation was felt that Napoleon should have called himself a *parvenu*, although in doing so he spoke the truth.

As to the Royalist party, they jeered at the mention of Josephine's virtues: " Yes, the Spaniard will possess all the virtues of the Creole! It will be a wonderful sight! *Qui vivra, verra!* "

## CHAPTER VI

### ROYAL NEGOTIATIONS

NAPOLEON was not exact, to say no more, when he said that he preferred a woman whom he loved to an alliance with some regal family, for it is certain that before he proposed to Mlle. de Montijo he did his best to marry a princess of the blood.

Fifteen years before his union with Eugénie, when Princess Mathilde was visiting Arenemberg, where Queen Hortense resided, and he was there also, there had been talk of an engagement between Mathilde and Louis Napoleon. The two young people often went for long walks by Lake Constance, and became united by a great sympathy, though their characters were very different. Queen Hortense was very fond of Mathilde, and she thought that her union with Louis Napoleon would assure her happiness. The Bonaparte family-council also approved of the projected match. However, Napoleon's adventure at Strasburg ended the idyll, and Mathilde married, in 1841, the Russian millionaire, Demidoff, who purchased an Italian principality and called himself Prince of San

Donato. She separated from the half-demented man after one miserable year. When Napoleon became President of the French Republic, he thought for the second time of marrying Mathilde. The Bonapartes were in favour of the union, but the Catholic Church refused to annul the marriage with Demidoff, and the President was obliged to look elsewhere for a wife.

His inquiries at St. Petersburg were unsuccessful. Neither did the Spanish and Portuguese Courts wish to trust one of their princesses to an adventurer. Count Tascher de la Pagerie conducted some negotiations in Bavaria, but also without success.

Fleury was sent to ask for the hand of the very poor but wonderfully beautiful Carola-Frederika, daughter of Prince Wasa, the son of Gustavus IV. of Sweden, who was deposed and succeeded by his uncle, Charles XIII. The beautiful Princess did not find Napoleon's portrait to her taste, and rejected the proposed alliance with tears, though it was distinctly advantageous to a princess in her position.

The Prince-President also asked for the hand of the Duchess of Hamilton, daughter of the Grand-Duchess Stephanie of Baden, who refused. Irénée Mauget says that he wished to marry the lovely Miss Emmy Rowles, who, by a strange coincidence, resided at Camden Place, Chislehurst, but the English girl also declined the honour!

Napoleon's position seemed so insecure that even the Jews refused to advance him any money. The London tailor, Poole, was more daring, for he lent

money to Louis Napoleon while he was staying in London, and was munificently recompensed by Napoleon III.

The Emperor's *amour-propre* suffered greatly at the humiliation of the repeated refusals, but, confident in ultimate success, he made an attempt to secure the hand of the Princess of Hohenzollern, sister of the prince who was a candidate for the Spanish throne.

Lord Malmesbury wrote in his interesting Memoirs, under the date of December 13, 1852: "Walewski came to ask the hand of the Princess Adelaide of Hohenlohe in marriage for the Emperor. I had foreseen this and told the Queen. Walewski said the Emperor's marriage with the Princess Wasa was off."

Then one reads, under the date of December 28, 1852: "When I went into the room, her Majesty began on the subject of the proposed marriage of her niece. The Prince read a letter from Prince Hohenlohe on the subject, which amounted to this, that he was not sure of the settlement being satisfactory, and that there were objections of religion and morals.

"The Queen and the Prince talked of the marriage reasonably and weighed the *pros* and *cons*. Afraid lest the Princess should be dazzled if she heard of the offer, I said I knew an offer would be made to the father. Walewski would go himself. The Queen alluded to the fate of all the wives of the rulers of France since 1789—a prophetic presentiment—but did not positively object to the marriage."

Clara Tschudi says in her book that Napoleon "through his friend, Lord Malmesbury, begged Queen Victoria to favour a union between himself and her cousin, Princess Mary of Cambridge; but, without actively opposing the plan, the Queen and the Prince Consort raised objections to it."

If one remembers that even during his poverty and exile, Napoleon always considered it preposterous that he should seek a wife outside the royal circle; if one adds to this that immediately before his marriage with Eugénie he was still trying for a princess, one is perfectly justified in surmising that his proposal to Mlle. de Montijo was not prompted solely by love, but a great deal by pique.

This supposition is strengthened by that which the Count de Vieil-Castel wrote: "Count Tascher de la Pagerie grumbled that the Emperor wished to dishonour his white hair, and that he was going to withdraw: 'To fail to keep his word, after having me begin the negotiations for his marriage with a German Princess! It is iniquitous! . .'"

On the other hand, if one thinks that the strength of Napoleon's passion was so opposed to his usual prudent control as to awaken the deepest surprise among those who knew him well, one is obliged to admit that one is confronted by a psychological problem which it would be presumptuous to claim to solve.

Had Napoleon been a little more patient, he would have succeeded in making an alliance with a princess of the blood.

Too great a stress has been put on his good-

temper and his inclination towards reverie. Queen Hortense called him " the sweet stronghead."

" That phlegmatic man who is always in a hurry ! " said one who knew him intimately, while Mme. Cornu, who was his playmate in childhood, said : " When he was a boy, he had accesses of anger such as I have not seen with other children."

A contemporary by the name of Lenoir said of him : " He did not suppress his impressions ; he stored them away. One day, after an interview at which Mme. Cornu was present and during which he was quite calm, he smashed all the furniture in the room, in order to assuage the wrath which he had until then locked up within him."

It was by a great effort of will that he succeeded in assuming the mask of a phlegmatic man, through the medium of which he deceived the world.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE IMPERIAL WEDDING

THE Imperial marriage was celebrated on January 30, 1853, with the usual regal pomp, and Eugénie's most ambitious dream was realised: she emerged from an adventurous twilight into the dazzling blaze of royal splendour.

The quiet of the Notre-Dame de Paris was for a whole week disturbed by an army of would-be artists, who thought that they could improve on the simple beauty produced by the mediæval craftsmen, by hiding the exquisite lines of the building under hangings and bunting, as is usually done on such occasions.

Berlioz applied for the honour of directing the music during the ceremony. His request was not granted, and the coveted distinction fell to the lot of Auber of the Opéra-Comique, whose orchestra included Adolph Adam, the brilliant composer of the "*Christmas Song*," which is now played annually in almost every church in France.

It was decided that from the numerous names

which Mlle. de Montijo received at her baptism in Spain, that of Eugénie should be chosen and used henceforth, and that she should wear a diadem instead of the virginal wreath of orange-blooms.

It was hoped that the Pope might be induced to come to Paris and by his presence add to the splendour of the ceremony, but he diplomatically declined the invitation. Perchance, while telling his secretary to write that his health prevented him from granting the request, he was thinking of the *mauvais tour* played on Pius VII. by Napoleon I.

The week preceding the wedding seemed one long moment of delight to the future Empress, who was greeted on all sides with marked distinction, while crowds bent the knee before her. She was the centre of attraction, but in Court circles, jealousy was rampant.

The civil marriage took place on the evening of January 29, 1853, at the Tuileries. Eugénie wore a white satin dress trimmed with lace, with two rows of exquisite pearls round her neck and flowers in her hair, in the Spanish way. The Emperor was in general's uniform, wearing the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, and surrounded by the whole resplendent Court.

At half-past eleven the next morning, Eugénie drove from the Elysée, which she occupied with her mother, to the Tuileries; her mother was seated on her left hand, and opposite her was Count Tascher de la Pagerie, Master of the Ceremonies.

The future Empress wore a white velvet gown,

with a long train, ornamented with costly lace, the design of which represented violets. Round her waist she had a belt of diamonds, and on her brow was the crown which Marie-Louise had worn on her wedding-day.

All the church-bells of the capital pealed forth on the stroke of twelve, and from the Hôtel des Invalides a salute of 101 guns thundered over the city as the future Empress started on her way to Notre-Dame.

In honour of the occasion Napoleon put on the collar of the Legion of Honour which had belonged to his uncle, Napoleon I., and the collar of the Golden Fleece which had once adorned the neck of Charles Quint. King Jérôme wore the collar of the Legion of Honour given to him by his brother, Napoleon I., and the collar of the Golden Fleece which had belonged to Cortez.

All the dresses of the ladies, we are told, were masterpieces of good taste, except that of Princess Mathilde, who, strangely enough, wore a dress very much like those at present in fashion. She did her best to introduce the mode then, but was unsuccessful.

Taxile Delord, an eye-witness of the ceremony, says: "It was noticed that the Empress, rising at the singing of the Gospel, made several crosses with her thumb—*à l'espagnole*—on her forehead, her lips and her heart."

Mme. Carette has another story: "There is an old saying that pearls worn by women on their wedding-day are the symbols of tears to come.

The Empress, however, did not then believe in this superstition, and on that day wore a magnificent necklace of pearls over her satin corsage. But alas! the omen was in this case only too faithfully fulfilled, and after the war the Empress sold this necklace with her other jewels."

Another omen which was also fulfilled concerned the Imperial crown adorning the top of the State carriage, which on December 2, 1804, had taken Napoleon I. and the Empress Josephine to their coronation at Notre-Dame, and which a few years later was also used for the marriage of the great soldier to his second wife.

As the coach passed through the palace gates, the crown became loose and fell to the ground. The horses were stopped and the crown was rapidly replaced, but an old servant under the first Empire said to the bystanders: " A bad sign! The same accident took place with the same coach and the same Imperial crown, when Marie-Louise and the great Napoleon were on their way to the Cathedral to be married."

" The little mansion of Villeneuve-l'Etang, still to be seen in the park of Saint-Cloud, had been prepared to receive the royal couple," Mme. Carette informs us. " Here, in a small circle of intimate friends, the Emperor and Empress passed the first days of their married life, happy in their love, solitude, and seclusion.

" On the morrow of their marriage, January 31, the Emperor and Empress drove under the glorious winter's sun through the beautiful frost-covered

woods of La Celle-Saint-Cloud and Ville d'Avray, on their way to Versailles.

"The Empress expressed a wish to visit Trianon, and to hear the story of the happy life led by Marie-Antoinette before the Revolution had cast its cruel shadow across her path.

"As if bound by some mysterious spell, the Empress has always worshipped the memory of the royal martyr. She ordered every object that had belonged to the Queen to be collected at Trianon, and, thanks to her care, this formed the nucleus of the *Musée des Souvenirs*, which is still in existence.

"Knowing the Empress's taste for everything relating to the memory of Marie-Antoinette, a friend sent her from Austria a very peculiar portrait. It was a full-length miniature of the Dauphine before her marriage, and at about the age of fourteen. Notwithstanding her extreme youth the grace and beauty of the future Queen were fully revealed, her arm being raised, and her finger pointing to her shapely neck, which, according to the fashion of the day, was encircled by a narrow red ribbon, like a fine streak of blood. The childlike face, the smiling and naïve features, and the ominous blood-red line, presented to the mind of the Empress Eugénie a striking and tragical reality."

With regard to the Empress's cult of everything concerning Marie-Antoinette, the Count de Vieil-Castel wrote:

"The Emperor and Empress yesterday visited

the *Musée des Souvenirs* and complimented Nieuwerkerke and myself on its arrangement. The Empress asked that Mme. Elizabeth's beautiful testamental letter should be read to her, and was deeply touched on hearing its contents. Souvenirs of Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette always move her greatly. It was sad and touching to look at the young and beautiful Empress, at the beginning of her reign, listening to that sad document. There was a lesson in misfortune, a sob from the past, which it is impossible to render in a simple narration."

The Marquise de Taisey-Chatenoy also refers to Eugénie's penchant for everything connected with Marie-Antoinette.

" The desire to resemble Marie-Antoinette has become a kind of mania with her—but that which fascinates her in her model are Marie-Antoinette's faults and foibles, and she makes an effort to copy them."

It was in Madrid, when the Montijos lived in Angel Square, and where Mérimée and Stendhal —those two inimitable story-tellers—taught her to love the history of France, that her young imagination was seized with a respectful awe towards that most charming and most unfortunate of Queens.

When as a child Eugénie grew sad under the influence of Mérimée's narration, he would take her on his lap and say : " Cheer up, little one. When you grow up, you will marry a Prince Charming and live happily ever after."

If the Prince she married was not as charming as the one represented in the fairy-tales, at least he was a nephew of the Great Emperor, officially.*

* See page 49.

## CHAPTER VIII

### IMPERIAL PREVARICATION

IN the speech in which Napoleon announced his will to put Mlle. de Montijo on the Imperial throne, he said that his consort had no relations on whom it would be necessary to lavish riches and honours.

However, she had a mother!

The Marquise de la Ferronnays says in her Memoirs:

"On the evening of the marriage, a misfortune befell poor Mme. de Montijo. As her daughter had gone to Saint-Cloud, there were no servants left at the Elysée, and she considered herself very lucky when Mme. Gould, a kind-hearted woman, part Jewess and part Portuguese, asked her to dine with her."

In the diary left by a detective of the Imperial police one reads:

"March 8, 1853.

"The Countess de Montijo is still living in Paris, and they say that her influence will be far greater than was expected. M. Fould was with her a great

deal last evening. This is not at all surprising when one remembers her intriguing in Madrid."

" March 24, 1853.

" Mme. de Montijo has left, on bad terms with the august tenants of the Tuileries. The *Journal d'Indre-et-Loire* announces that she has passed through Tours, accompanied by M. Mérimée. Everybody knows that the Parisian scandal-mongers have had a great deal to say about the relations that exist between the author of *Colomba* and the Countess de Montijo."

" March 25, 1853.

" It is said that the reason for the Empress's mother leaving Paris a few days ago was that she was ordered to do so by the Emperor, who had been informed of the scandalous conduct, both past and present, of his mother-in-law.

" The Empress, it is said, is very much dissatisfied with the enforced departure of her mother. It seems that there was a quarrel between certain ladies, of whom Princess Mathilde was one. ' If the Emperor had wished to have an Empress Mother, he would have found her elsewhere,' said the Princess recently."

When the Countess de Montijo was about to leave Paris for Spain, Mérimée wrote to his old friend :

" It is a dreadful thing to have daughters and to marry them. *Que voulez-vous?* The Bible says that the wife must leave her parents, and follow her husband. Now that your duties are fulfilled—

and, in all truth, nobody could deny that you have married your daughters very well—you must think of living for yourself and having a good time. Try to become a little egotistical."

Apparently she did not need to follow his advice, for documents were found among the old papers at the Tuileries showing that the Countess de Montijo received 600,000 francs on February 2; 89,739 francs on April 9; and 668,421 francs on May 27. Total: 1,358,160 francs in three months!

*La mère Cabas*, as the incorrigible Rochefort disrespectfully called the Empress's mother, did not find sufficient amusement in Madrid, and returned to Paris, where she developed a mania for spending money lavishly, buying anything she had a fancy for, and sending the accounts to her daughter, or even to her son-in-law, who, being still under the sway of Eugénie's charm, would say nothing, and order his mother-in-law's bills to be settled.

She was steadfast in her friendship for Mérimée, for through her intriguing the author became a senator—that is, if we accept the evidence of the already-mentioned detective, who says:

"June 27.

"Everybody attributes M. Mérimée's rise to senatorial rank to the Countess de Montijo's influence. The relations between those two personages are well-known, and are much commented on by evil tongues."

The Count de Vieil-Castel refers to other members of the Imperial family thus:

"The Prince Napoleon has done all he could for

his family; Murat received one million; Jérôme two millions; Mme. Camerata one million, etc."

Napoleon kept his word, and did not lavish riches on his family or his wife's! . . .

## CHAPTER IX

### NAPOLEON'S COURT

ALTHOUGH Napoleon III. called himself a *parvenu*, he determined to have a very gorgeous court. After a short honeymoon stay at the charming little château of Villeneuve l'Etang, the Imperial couple returned to the gloomy and uncomfortable Palace of the Tuileries, where both the Emperor and his beautiful consort set to work in earnest to form their Court.

The difficulties were great, for Napoleon III., like his uncle, Napoleon I., wished to be surrounded by ancient names, while the old noblesse demurred. "Our phalanx remained faithful," wrote the Marquise de la Ferronnays.

Nor was the nobility of the First Empire overeager to appear at the Court of the Second Empire, as is shown by the following lines, found in the Memoirs of the Count de Vieil-Castel: "A few days before the formation of the Emperor's Household, Bassano said: 'I have made an arrangement to enable Mme. de Bassano to refuse the charge of *Grande Maîtresse;* I do not wish her to appear in

the retinue of the Empress.' " Aristocratic Bassano!

Finally, the difficulties were overcome, and the Court was formed of both men and women possessing big titles, if not long lines of ancestors. The *Grand Mâitre* was Count Tascher de la Pagerie, while at the head of the six *dames du palais* was *la dame d'honneur* in the person of the Princess d'Essling, a daughter-in-law of Masséna. The Duchess de Bassano, wife of the Emperor's Grand Chamberlain, also received the title of lady-of-honour. The six *dames du palais* were chosen from among the Empress's personal friends. They were :—

The Marchioness de Los Marismas, afterwards the Viscountess Aguado, whose exquisite beauty was enhanced by her personal grace and charm. She was the mother of the charming and accomplished Duchesse de Montmorency;

The Countess de Montebello, née de Villeneuve-Bargemont, of whom the Empress was particularly fond;

The Countess de Lazay Marnesia;

The Baronne de Malaret, a very handsome woman, of rare elegance;

The Baronne de Pierres, who was the best horsewoman in France, and yet the most timid of persons;

The Marquise de Latour-Maubourg, a daughter of the Duc de Trévise; her husband was a striking figure at Court, and reminded one of those old knights from whom he was descended.

" Mme. de Maubourg," says Mme. Carette,

" who was both good and charming, adored her husband, the two of them often being teased about their perpetual honeymoon. One day she was asked : ' What would you do if you were informed that your husband was deceiving you? ' ' I should be so astonished, that I should die of surprise,' was her reply."

There is a large painting by Winterhalter representing the Empress surrounded by all her ladies, each one more beautiful than the other. This picture is now at Fontainebleau.

None of Eugénie's portraits do her entire justice; the contemporary painters could express the beautiful lines, but not one of them was talented enough to catch her peculiar charm and gracefulness. It is a pity that there was not a great man to portray those charming women, for we could then have been spared the *fadeurs* of Winterhalter's art.

The same applies to all the contemporary busts and statues. The Empress was aware of this, and she was not eager to pose for them. However, Itasse has left a pretty and well-modelled medallion of her.

The great Carpeaux, who was invited to Compiègne, was very anxious to model the Empress. During the evenings he would make small sketches under cover of his hat, trying to fix Eugénie's attitudes. Notwithstanding Carpeaux's great talent, the Empress hesitated to pose for him. In order to persuade her to do so, he resolved to begin by modelling a head of Mlle. Bouvet, who was reputed to bear a great likeness to the Empress. The

posing bored Mlle. Bouvet, and she begged Carpeaux to wait until the next winter. He granted her request, but in the meanwhile he executed a medallion of her. Mlle. Bouvet showed it to the Empress.

"It is charming," said the Empress, "but there is something too accentuated in the line of the chin. This must be softened." She touched the medallion,—the inexperienced fingers pressed too hard on the clay; the Empress tried to smooth out the damage, and the medallion was spoiled. She asked Mlle. Bouvet to return it to the sculptor, without telling him the name of the perpetrator of this piece of involuntary vandalism. Mlle. Bouvet told the artist that the medallion had fallen from her hands.

Carpeaux nevertheless did not execute the Empress's bust, but the following year he modelled that lovely group which represents the Prince Imperial leaning on "Negro," the fine brown setter presented to Napoleon III. by Baron Zorn von Bulach.

The number of the ladies of the Palace was afterwards increased to twelve, and to make up this number the Empress chose the following:

Mme. de Sancy de Parabère, a very witty lady of charming and graceful appearance and of an upright character;

The high-spirited Countess de la Bédoyère, *née* de Laroche-Lambert, who had great musical talent;

The Countess de Poëze, sister of the Countess de la Bédoyère;

The Empress Eugénie and her Ladies in Waiting

The unmarried Countess de Rayneval, who posed as the Muse crowning Cherubini, in the painting by Ingres;

The Countess de Lourmel, who was very short in stature, and by no means handsome;

The Baronne de Viry-Cohendier, who came of a very old Savoyard family, and was a woman with an agreeable figure and very pretty brown eyes.

The etiquette was very strict at court, for such was the wish of the *Empereur-parvenu*.

The Marquise de la Ferronnays states that:

"The new Sovereign was bored in the midst of all this splendour. She never loved the Emperor, and her heart remained faithful to the Marquess d'Alcanisses, her former fiancé. The Marchioness de Bedmar, the Empress' Spanish friend, told me that she said to her on the day before the wedding, 'Were Alcanisses to claim me now, I would go with him.' But Alcanisses did not come; a few years later, as the Duke of Sesto, he married the widow of M. de Morny."

Shortly after she had taken her seat on the throne which she had so ardently desired, Mlle. de Montijo became disenchanted, and one day she exclaimed bitterly, "Is this all?"

In the diary left by the detective, to whom reference has already been made, appears the following:

"March 24, 1853.

"People maliciously pity the sadness of the Empress. She is apparently living in a state of constraint most irksome to her after the freedom to

which she was accustomed before her unexpected elevation to a throne."

"April 5.

"Rumour continues to represent the Empress as being very bored. She cannot forget the extreme freedom which she enjoyed before her marriage."

Then we have the authority of the Count de Vieil-Castel, who was familiar with the life at the Tuileries, and who wrote: "Nothing could be more monotonous than Her Majesty's life; she hardly goes out, she does not do any work proper for a lady, and she reads but very little."

It would appear that the Court of Napoleon III., notwithstanding its apparent brilliancy, was very vulgar. The Count de Vieil-Castel says:

"The Court is very busy about etiquette, though nobody there knows what etiquette is—*c'est un tohu-bohu impayable*. The new nobles stand before mirrors in order to bow to themselves and call themselves 'my lord.' Ridicule is becoming to all these lordlings."

Then, in another place:

"Unfortunately the Empress is surrounded by old gossips and worthless men; it is unfortunate also that the Emperor's Court is not composed of better men. When one knows what a Court really should be like, one withdraws sick with disgust. All those who are not stupid are base, and all those who are base are honoured.

"All the pretty women court Bacciochi in order to win the Emperor's favour. To do so leads

to everything. Look at Walewski; his wife is worth her weight in gold to him. Then La Bédoyère, the dirtiest, fattest and most stupid of men; he married, and soon afterwards became a Knight of the Legion of Honour and a Senator. Mocquard, former *aide-maquereau* of the Emperor, the man who fostered Miss Howard, is a sharper, an egotist and a clever thief. Walsh, the chamberlain, is a card-sharper and formerly lived on Mme. de Coislin. All these people disgrace the Emperor."

If the *grande noblesse* avoided the Tuileries, the Diplomatic Corps, *par contre*, was never so brilliant as under the Second Empire.

Among the foreign diplomatists, a conspicuous place—in regard to extravagance—was held by Vleti Pasha, uncle of Princess Serge Ouroussoff, who was a daughter of Giurdy Zedé Hilmy Pasha. Vleti Pasha was sent to Paris as Turkish Ambassador, and spent an enormous fortune, made by his father when Viceroy of Crete, in competing with Napoleon III. in the luxurious display of equipages and lavish entertainments.

The Turkish Ambassadors always aroused a great amount of curiosity in Paris, and the courtiers watched with malicious smiles for possible *gaffes* by those men from a country so different in customs and manners from theirs.

Djemyl Pasha, dining at the Court for the first time, was placed on the right of the Empress. At a certain moment he said to her, without any reason whatever: "There is in to-day's paper a very ludicrous letter concerning Algeria." At the

time, much comment had been aroused by Napoleon's open letter to Mac-Mahon, then Governor of that province.

The guests began to smile; the Empress thought that the Turk had made a mistake, and asked him: "Do you know the author of that letter?" "No, but I know that he is an idiot." The Emperor began to laugh, everybody tried to appear embarrassed; the Empress, wishing to stop further rude remarks, said, "It was the Emperor who wrote that letter." "Not at all," answered the Ambassador, smiling intelligently. "It was a priest who wishes to convert Islam."

The Empress had considerable influence over that heterogeneous world of diplomatists.

"Helped by a remarkable quality of assimilation," says Irénée Mauget, "the Empress soon became familiar with Imperial etiquette. She reassumed her haughty and authoritative character. It was obvious then that she was not endowed with the *esprit de suite*. She, who at first grumbled most at the exigencies of etiquette and even rebelled against the Emperor, who insisted that she should observe it, now defended that same etiquette and severely reprimanded those who did not observe it.

"At that brilliant but hastily formed Court there were shocks, awkward acts and collisions. It lacked that royalist society of which the Empress was madly fond. She did everything possible to attract it to the Tuileries, but failed. She half consoled herself by giving *fêtes* in which she dazzled. Never before had a sovereign attended all the Parisian theatres so much."

The first time the Empress appeared at a ball at the Tuileries she produced a sensation; she was dazzling in her beauty and jewels; there was not a woman there who did not envy her lot. A daring *décolletage* showed a splendid throat and magnificent shoulders.

The Empress soon conquered the populace, and was heartily cheered whenever she appeared in public. Everything Spanish was *à la mode*, and one journalist wrote: "We shall soon have bull-fights. Spain is the rage, and more or less authentic Castillians are as numerous as ants on the macadam roads of Paris."

The newspapers of the time are full of paragraphs in which every movement, every gesture, every word of the Empress are recorded, her toilettes and equipages minutely described. Here are some examples:

"January 1, 1854.

"The ball announced at H.I.H. the Princess Mathilde's took place last night. The *fête* was exquisitely tasteful and luxurious. The Empress wore a blue toilette."

"January 2.

"Great *fête* at the Tuileries, given by the sovereigns. M. de Bassano is at the foot of the throne, to the left of the Empress. At his side are three chamberlains. The nearest of them asks the name of the person about to be presented; the name is repeated by three pairs of lips, and it is said to Bassano, who, in his turn, repeats it to Their Majesties. One bows twice and then withdraws."

"When the Empress went for a drive, her *equipage* was the most splendid that could be seen in the world," says George Cox in his interesting "Horse Tales." "General Fleury, who was Master of the Horse to the Emperor, was a great connoisseur, and always purchased the very best animals that money could procure. It was always his custom to give at least six weeks notice of an intended visit to England, in order that carefully-selected and suitable horses should be ready for his inspection."

*Fêtes* followed one after the other, and the sovereigns seemed to be happy. But all is not gold that glitters, runs the wise saying. Napoleon III., although he always loved Eugénie, was very fickle, and as she was not a Catherine of Braganza, willing to tolerate the presence of a Lady Castlemaine beside her, *inde ira.*

## CHAPTER X

### LE LION AMOUREUX

NAPOLEON'S calf-love for an Italian lady of rank took place when he was a mere stripling. But when, *à la Trovatore*, he cast himself pleadingly at her feet, she laughed so heartily that he recovered from his amorous intoxication.

His first mistress was a Parisienne, by the name of Eleonore-Marie Brault, a singer, married to Archer Gordon, a Colonel of the Florentine Legion in the service of Isabella II. of Spain. In connection with the preparations for the Strasburg attempt of 1836 she proved herself one of the most skilful and devoted of the future Emperor's allies. He had one daughter by her; she married and lived in England. Eleonore-Marie Brault died in 1849.

Count Fleury says in his Memoirs that when Napoleon was in England, Count d'Orsay, the famous dandy, made him acquainted with Miss Howard, and he was immediately fascinated by her great beauty. According to those who knew her in London, she had then an exquisite figure, at once stately and graceful, with features such as only

one of the great Greek sculptors could have chiselled. Subsequently she became extremely stout, but even then her head retained a great deal of its former beauty.

Her exact origin is not known. In the registers of the parish of La Celle-Saint-Cloud, she is described as Elizabeth Anna Haryett, called Miss Howard, Countess de Beauregard, born in England in 1823. This must be wrong, for it would make her only seventeen years old at the time of the Boulogne affair. Her grandson was registered as Richard Martyn Haryett, whence one may infer that Haryett was a surname.

Count Fleury says that at the time when Napoleon made her acquaintance in London, she was living there under the protection of Major Mountjoy Martyn, of the 2nd Life Guards.

It is extremely doubtful whether Miss Howard financed the Boulogne attempt in August, 1840, as is also the well-known story about her giving Louis-Napoleon her diamonds. However, it is true that she advanced him money on a mortgage on the estate of Civita Nuova, which he had inherited from his father.

In 1848 Miss Howard followed Napoleon to Paris, where she lived at the Hôtel Meurice, then the English hotel *par excellence*. Thence she went to occupy a house in the rue du Cirque, close to the Elysée. Napoleon used to leave the palace through a small door opening on to the rue de Cirque, cross the road, open another door and find himself in Miss Howard's apartment, where he often met

people of consequence, including that great æsthete, the Marquess of Hertford.

The detective of the Imperial Police says in his diary: "There is a great deal of talk about a *demoiselle* called Alexandre, who is, for the moment, the Emperor's mistress. In the meanwhile, the former affection for Miss Howard has changed into friendship, and the calls at her house in the Champs-Elysées are very frequent."

The Opposition took advantage of his *liaison* with Miss Howard to attack Napoleon. Even the Bonaparteists had something to say on the matter, and one of them wrote: "The most indulgent public cannot but be afflicted by the sight of the Prince-President's mistress, Miss Howard, sitting in his box and covered with diamonds."

Napoleon, defending himself from those attacks, wrote a letter in which he said: "I own that I am guilty of seeking in illegal bonds the affection which my heart requires. As, however, my position has hitherto prevented me from marrying, and as, amid all the cares of government, I possess, alas! in my native country, from which I was so long absent, neither intimate friends, nor ties of childhood, nor relatives to give me the joys of family life, I may well be forgiven, I think, for an affection which harms nobody, and which I do not seek to make conspicuous."

Miss Howard, who aspired to the rôle of La Pompadour, thought that Napoleon would marry her, and when she learned about his projected union with Eugénie, she was furious and threatened to make a scandal.

Again, under the date of September 21, one finds in the diary of the detective:

"Miss Howard has very expensive caprices, and, very recently, it was necessary to give her 150,000 francs, which sum was necessary—according to M. Mocquard—to keep her quiet."

Her wrath was assuaged by the counter-threat of imprisonment. She was obliged to keep quiet, which she did whole-heartedly when her former lover purchased for her the Château de Beauregard at La Celle-Saint-Cloud, for which he paid 5,000,000 francs, and made her a Countess.

The *liaison* lasted from 1846 to 1853. In 1854, she married an Englishman named Clarence Trelawney.*

During his imprisonment at the Château de

* My publisher, Mr. John Lane, has furnished me with the following facts concerning Miss Howard.

Elizabeth Ann Haryett, better known as Miss Howard, was the daughter of Joseph Harryett, a waiter, who lived at No. 22 Hanover Crescent, Brighton, and grand-daughter of the Harryett who, with one Gibburd, kept the old Castle Hotel, Brighton. In her youth she was employed in a livery stable in the capacity of riding-mistress, and in this way she came into contact with those well-known people through whom she achieved fame. She became successively the mistress of a steeplechase rider, of Major Mountjoy Martyn, A. W. Kinglake, and Louis Napoleon, whom she met at a ball given by Lady Blessington. Kinglake and Louis Napoleon quarrelled over her; hence, it is said, the merciless character of Chapter XIV. of his "Invasion of the Crimea." Miss Howard not only financed the Prince in 1848 before his election to the Presidency, but for some years after, when she lived in Paris. She frequently travelled with him and was often seen at his side on public occasions. When in 1853 he married Eugénie, she received the farewell gifts of £250,000, the Beauregard Estate, near Versailles, and the title of Countess de Beauregard. In 1854 she married Mr. Clarence Trelawney, whose father, Mr. Brereton Trelawney, came of an old Cornish family. At the time of their marriage, her husband was an officer in the Austrian army. Some years later they were divorced by a decree of the French Courts, and Trelawney married the daughter of the British Consul at Munich. In 1861 he shot himself, leaving his widow and five daughters in needy circumstances. Miss Howard had one son, Count de Bechevet, who did not enjoy a good reputation. On the day of his coming-of-age, at a fête at Beauregard, he asked his mother, in front of all the guests: "*Maintenant que je suis majeur, Madame, peut-être daigneriez-vous me dire le nom de mon père?*" In reply, she slapped his face. She died at Beauregard, aged forty-one. Before her death she abjured the Protestant religion, and was received into the Roman Church. She was buried in Chesney cemetery, the nearest village to Beauregard. She had always been very charitable, allowing her parents £840 per annum, besides giving large sums to the poor, of whom a great number followed her coffin. Her tombstone bears the inscription: "Elizabeth Ann Harryet, dite Miss Howard, née en Angleterre 1823." Her son, Count de Bechevet, died leaving one son and two daughters, whose disputes over his will were not finally settled by the Courts until 1908.

Ham, Louis-Napoleon contrived to carry on an intrigue with Alexandrine-Eléonore Vergeot, who washed his linen. She became the mother of two sons by the Prince : the elder became Count d'Orx and the younger Count de Labenne.

The Emperor was very volatile, and the Marquise de Taisey-Châtenoy says : " Any interlocutor was immediately left if a pretty woman passed near His Majesty. All those who knew this weakness of the sovereign—and there were very few who did not—used the most daring means to oblige him to come near. It was very amusing to watch the evolutions made by the great coquettes. One evening, Mesdames de Neuvied and de Saint-Brieux changed their places more than ten times, without any reason, or pretext, crossing the drawing-room's length and width, *en biais*, in order to pass before the Emperor and receive a compliment from him."

Prospère Mérimée wrote to Panizzi : " He has the fault of being fonder of petticoats than is proper for a young man of his age."

Napoleon was very much sought after by women, and he once said : " Usually, it is man who attacks ; as for me, I defend myself, and I often capitulate."

The Count de Vieil-Castel says that he heard the following story from Princess Mathilde :

" At a ball at the Tuileries I noticed that he was very preoccupied, and I asked him the reason. ' I have a bad headache,' he replied. ' Moreover, I am persecuted by three women. I have the blonde on the ground floor, of whom I try my best to get rid. (This was Mme. de la Bédoyère). Then I

have the lady on the first floor (the Countess de Castiglione), who is very beautiful, but bores me to death, and there still remains the blonde of the second floor (Countess Walewska), who follows me everywhere.'

" ' But the Empress?——' ' I was faithful to her during the first six months of our union, but I need little distractions . . . and I always return to her with pleasure.' "

There is another story which one finds in one of the six volumes left by the same author, equally credited to Princess Mathilde:

" I was sitting with Mme. Hamelin opposite the door that separated the two apartments. The Emperor was on one side alone with Marianne (Countess Walewska). The Empress, Walewski and other people were in another apartment. The door opened from time to time and we could see Marianne sitting on my darling cousin's knee."

Then the Countess de Castiglione appeared at court. Mme. Carette says of her: " Madame de Castiglione was an accomplished lady, and possessed of a beauty which did not seem to belong to our time. But notwithstanding the admirable perfection and even the gracefulness of her person, scarcely credible though this may seem, she lacked charm. Her beautiful face recalled to mind those divinities whom the ancients sought to appease by sacrifices. You can form some idea of this extraordinary person by imagining a most beautiful statue come to life."

The portrait drawn by the pen of the Count de Vieil-Castel is more lively: " Yesterday I dined at

Princess Mathilde's with the Countess de Castiglione. It is impossible to behold a more seductive creature, more perfectly beautiful: beautiful eyes, fine nose, little mouth, admirable hair, ravishing shoulders and arms, and hands of an irreproachable line. The Countess's conversation is animated and light."

The Countess de Castiglione was a daughter of the Marquis Oldoini of Florence, and through Countess Walewska, also a Florentine lady, obtained an invitation to a ball at the Tuileries. She was separated from her husband—Count Francesco Verasis di Castiglione—who married against his will the former mistress of King Victor Emmanuel. Her Christian name was Virginia.

After her arrival in Paris, Cavour wrote to the Chevalier Cibrario: "I advise you that I have enrolled into the ranks of diplomacy the very beautiful countess, enjoining her to be coquettish and, if need be, to seduce."

The Emperor was coquetted with and fell, and the Countess de Castiglione became the rival of the Empress at the Court of the Second Empire, where she often was "more than the Empress." The Count de Vieil-Castel wrote:

"Last night (February 17, 1857) there was a fancy-dress ball at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Countess de Castiglione, who, they say, is on the most intimate terms with the Emperor, had the most fantastic and daring costume imaginable. Half Louis XIV., half modern, it won her the title of *Dame des cœurs*, because of the numerous hearts embroidered on the gown. Wise people mur-

mured, 'There is not an Emperor, but the Emperor and La Castiglione his prophet.' More than one woman let loose her jealousy; impartial men thought, but did not say, 'I would like to be the Emperor.'

"As to the Countess, she carried the weight of her beauty insolently. The proud Countess does not wear corsets; she would willingly be a model to a Phidias, if there were one, and she would pose clad only in her beauty. La Castiglione is a courtesan like Aspasia; she is proud of her beauty and she veils it only as much as is necessary to be admitted into a drawing-room."

While Vieil-Castel christens her Aspasia, Fleury calls her a female Narcissus, always in adoration before her own beauty—ambitious without grace and haughty without reason.

Her reign was of a short duration; it lasted only about one year, during which time she resided at 53 rue Montaigne. She tried hard to recover her influence and if she did not succeed, at least she was not broken-hearted, and preserved her haughty manner, as is shown by the following story:

"In 1860, Prince Jérôme gave a ball in honour of the Empress. Towards two o'clock, the Sovereigns were about to retire when, coming up the stairs, the Countess de Castiglione found herself passing them. 'You arrive late, Madame la Comtesse,' said the Emperor politely. 'It is you, Sire, that are leaving too early.' And she entered the ball-room, with that air of crushing disdain in which she envelopes the whole of humankind."

The Marquess of Hertford apparently succeeded

THE COUNTESS DE CASTIGLIONE

the Emperor, for the Count de Vieil-Castel wrote: "Prince Napoleon affirmed to his sister that Lord Hertford has given one million to the Countess de Castiglione. He said that this was told him by Hertford himself."

Although there is no doubt that the Countess de Castiglione was extraordinarily beautiful, her beauty was challenged in 1857 at Compiègne, where the guests also included the Duchess of Manchester, afterwards Duchess of Devonshire, by whose radiant charms she was eclipsed. The Marquise de Contades wrote to Marshal de Castellane: "The Duchess of Manchester is as beautiful as daylight; she quite surpasses Mme. de Castiglione; she has a profile like an antique cameo, and it is a delight to look at her."

The Countess de Castiglione made many a brave attempt to re-conquer her empire but all in vain. Often she set at defiance the Empress, and she said a long time afterwards: "My mother was stupid in chaining me to Castiglione. Had she brought me to France, no Spanish woman would have reigned there. Nor would I have made the Mexican war, nor been the cause of the disaster at Sedan."

The last years of her life she spent in a little flat in the Place Vendôme in Paris, where she lived with the shutters of her windows continually closed; there were no mirrors in her abode, for she did not wish to see the ravages that merciless time had inflicted on her great beauty.

Had the Italian Ambassador in Paris not been prompt in executing the orders received from his

superiors in Rome, and not burnt all the papers left in the rooms of the great beauty, some curious State secrets would have been revealed.

## CHAPTER XI

### CHRONIQUE SCANDALEUSE

COUNT WALEWSKI was the illegitimate son of Napoleon I. and Marie Walewska, a Polish lady of noble birth. Her love episode with the Great Napoleon has been represented in a masterly manner by the Polish author Waclaw Gasiorowski, and when it was translated into English, the critics were unanimous in qualifying it as the best romance on Napoleon's life.

Walewski's first wife was a daughter of Lord Sandwich, his second wife was a Florentine, " a beautiful woman," says Lord Malmesbury, " who did the honours of their embassy to perfection," when Walewski was French Ambassador at the Court of St. James's. Her maiden name was Ricci.

The Count de Vieil-Castel speaks of her intrigues with the Emperor thus :

" Mme. Walewska reigns now, but she is afraid of the return of Mme. de Castiglione. She hides her favours but very little . . . some time ago she went to see the Empress and said to her with

the most superb impudence : ' I am obliged to ask Your Majesty not to invite me any more to your *soirées particulières*, for they accuse me of being the Emperor's mistress, and I don't wish this calumny to lower me in Your Majesty's eyes; I must not come near Your Majesty until those villainous slanders have been stopped.' The Empress, much moved, kissed her, and their intimacy became still closer.

" Mme. Walewska and the Emperor show themselves together a great deal; last evening their conversation caused comment. The Emperor remained till six o'clock, and danced the cotillion with the Countess, which did not prevent him from flirting with Mme. Gréville. Princess Marie of Baden overheard Countess Walewska making a scene on account of Mme. Gréville, and she addressed him as *tu!* "

Then again : " Princess Mathilde said how much she regretted the publicity surrounding the Emperor's gift to Walewska, of an estate in the *departement* of the Landes, bringing in 100,000 francs a year. This gift renders Walewski impossible—he has discredited himself. Marianne is a true little *rouée*, who, friendly with the Emperor, succeeded in becoming very friendly with the Empress; but she is afraid of her husband. ' Walewski's feigned ignorance is a comedy,' said Chamont-Quitry to me. ' I have seen him, in the park of Villeneuve, turn his head and proceed in an opposite direction when he perceived in a side-path the Emperor with his wife.' "

Still from Vieil-Castel's Memoirs :—" Walewski

is much shaken; his wife's credit is annihilated; she has passed to the rank of reformed sultanas. Six weeks ago at Pierrefonds, she greatly admired a lizard gargoyle in the restored part of the castle. 'It is very well executed,' she said, 'but such a water-pipe must be very expensive.' 'Less expensive than yours, Madam,' answered Marshal Vaillant. One of those present at this skirmish reproved the Marshal for his vivacity. 'Do you not know, then,' answered the rough Minister of the Household, 'that this *traînage* has cost us four million francs!'"

The Marquise de la Ferronnays has left in her Memoirs a curious story concerning Marquerite Bellanger, whom Napoleon met at Vichy in 1863, and to whom he gave a house at Passy—No. 27 rue des Vignes.

"I learned a great many details of the intimate life of the court through a great Spanish lady and friend of the Empress, the Marchioness de Bellemar. The Emperor lived continually in a manner detrimental to his health. Very often he would leave the Tuileries at night, accompanied only by Lebel, La Varenne, or Bacciochi. One night he had a fit at Marguerite Bellanger's house. The detectives whose duty was to watch over his security became bewildered, and summoned the Empress, who went to take him away from the house of a *horizontale* who once swept the streets of Angers. Violent scenes in the Imperial ménage followed that scandalous adventure, and they went so far that the Emperor, tired of constant reproaches, talked so seriously of divorce that

Fleury's influence was necessary to convince him that a great wrong would be done to the dynasty if the scandal became known."

Another *grande dame* of the Court has left the following story:

"The Count de Vieil-Castel desired the Cross of the Legion of Honour to be bestowed upon him. The Empress promised it to him, but the Emperor hesitated, for he was not very fond of that ever-criticizing nobleman. Finally Nieuwerkerke, superintendent of the Beaux-Arts, came to tell him that his name had been placed on the list for August 5th. 'The Cross for me! What the devil shall I do with it?' 'Then let us not talk about it. I thought it would please you, but we will find somebody else for it.' 'Well,' rejoined Vieil-Castel, seeing that he had gone too far, 'I understand that the Emperor wishes from time to time to give the Cross to someone who deserves it. . . .' 'Oh, no! Let us drop the matter,' answered Nieuwerkerke, and Vieil-Castel, was not decorated.

"The Count thereupon began to think out a plan of vengeance. He was a fine art connoisseur, and Nieuwerkerke often sought his enlightened advice. Vieil-Castel suggested to him that he should purchase for the Empress four busts representing the seasons, in his opinion a marvellous work, which a sculptor friend of his was obliged to sell. Nieuwerkerke, pleased at the suggestion, spoke to the Empress as if it came from him; she agreed, the busts were purchased and taken to the Tuileries. They were placed in the pink drawing-room, and the Empress came with the Emperor to

inspect them. They both approached the busts . . . looked . . . alas! The Emperor left, twisting his moustache, and the Empress rushed out, slamming the door. The four busts represented Marguerite Bellanger.

" Nieuwerkerke was immediately summoned before the Empress, who called him an ass. Napoleon this time lost his temper, and became purple with anger. Vieil-Castel was avenged! "

Another amusing story is recounted by the elegant Marquise de Taisey-Châtenoy, who, in an interesting little volume of reminiscences, wittily tells how she nearly succumbed to the Emperor, and how she was saved by the story told her by an intimate friend, whose true name she concealed under that of Paulette de Lerignan.

Paulette began her narration by telling how, during a walk in the park in Compiègne, she met the Emperor, and how he began to flirt with her. Then she says :

" The day fixed for the inauguration of the famous *manège* of flying wooden horses had come, and, at the appointed hour, everybody was on the lawn. After two trial rounds, the Marquis de Massa began to play the hand-organ, and we mounted the wooden horses. I came down at the first stop, terribly dizzy, and was directing my steps towards a bench which I saw dimly, when I felt an arm seize me and support me. I turned round : it was the Emperor. He conducted me to the bench, sat beside me, and looked at me while I rearranged my hair. ' Walk a little . . . it will do you good,' he said. I rose and took a few

steps forward. . . . Suddenly he put his arm round my waist, bent his head and kissed my hair and my neck, and I heard him whispering into my ear: 'This evening.'

"We returned. He offered me his hand and made me mount the famous sorrel horse with green velvet housings, on which was embroidered the letter N. with the Imperial crown. When I found myself in my room, I was happy. . . . The door of my room opened suddenly, and my husband entered like the wind. I began to tremble, but I learned that he had just received the Emperor's orders to leave at once with M. Rouher, in order to be present at the sitting of a Commission. He had hardly disappeared behind the door when my maid came to tell me that, in the absence of my husband, I was to occupy a more comfortable room, situated at the extreme end of the corridor: the blue room!

"The evening seemed long. The Emperor did not speak to me at all, and did not even come and sit by me for one moment. This neglect contrasted so strongly with the attentions he had displayed towards me a few hours before that I was terribly upset and disappointed. Just before midnight, when he was about to retire, I felt that he was looking at me. . . . I raised my eyes and found that I was not mistaken. He turned and went slowly out, his head inclined, and twisting his moustache. A few minutes later, I also left and went to my new room and inspected it. I wished, before the expected attack, to reconnoitre its weak

points, and to find those places through which the enemy might enter.

" I then undressed without looking at the horrible door, and shivering slightly dived into bed and disappeared under the coverlet. My maid put my things in order, blew out the lamp and covered the fire with ashes.

" A night light was placed on the mantelpiece. What was going to happen? Foolish question! I knew! Perhaps at the bottom of my heart, there was a slight feeling of satisfaction at the thought of the coming defeat. The weathercock turning on the Castle Tower broke in upon the profound quiet.

" I waited, but not for long. A slight noise came to my ears, and the door—that terrible door, opened softly. Silhouetted against the corridor lamp stood the Emperor, but not the Emperor with whom I was familiar. He had neither sceptre, nor crown, nor the mantle lined with ermine and embroidered with golden bees. He wore neither his general's uniform covered with orders, his sword and riding boots, nor his ceremonial costume with the great red ribband, knee breeches, silk stockings and buckled shoes.

" No, the Emperor whom I beheld was stripped of all human pomp : he appeared as a simple—very simple mortal.

" The clothes which hid the august form consisted of a mauve silk pyjama suit. On the left side there was a handkerchief in a pocket, and on the collar shone a bee embroidered in gold.

" Had his long moustache not been waxed, I could not have recognised him. He advanced with

uneven steps because of the darkness. With one foot he pushed aside an armchair. I saw his shadow approaching my bed; it bent. I closed my eyes and my destiny was accomplished.

"The situation lasted but a short time. The Emperor recovered his calm and majesty promptly. I looked at him from the corner of my eyes; his eyes were closed, the ends of his moustache, now unwaxed, were hanging down limply. He breathed heavily.

"The night-light suddenly went out. 'Oh!' I exclaimed, vexed a little. 'Ah!' sighed the Emperor. A moment later His Majesty rose, crossed the room, guiding his steps by means of the furniture. The door opened and closed and I found myself alone.

"My clock struck two. It had struck half-past one a few moments after the door had opened for the first time. . . . Half an hour was sufficient to make me an Empress."

Paulette de Lerignan looked forward to a brilliant future, similar to that of her great grandmother, who had been loved by Louis XV. and thereby enabled her family to emerge from the obscurity of a half-ruined castle in Gascony,—but in this she was deeply disappointed. The next day her maid told her that the order had been given for her belongings to be removed from the blue room to that previously occupied by her. When the hour for riding the wooden horses came again the Emperor helped somebody else to mount the sorrel horse.

The neglected beauty began to think how she

could avenge the insult, and during the night she left her room quietly, went to the *manège*, and unscrewed the sorrel horse. The next day, at the moment when the merry-go-round was turning at top speed, the horse came loose and the favoured lady fell heavily to the ground, her petticoats over her head. When, at the end of her visit to Compiègne, Paulette was leaving to join her husband, a jewel worth 15,000 francs was handed to her, from the Emperor. *L'Empereur parvenu* was less munificent than Louis XV!

Sometimes the over-enterprising Emperor made dreadful mistakes. One winter afternoon, during a tea-party, he touched a frock in the badly-lighted drawing-room . . . the frock was scented . . . he pinched a calf. . . . An exclamation which had nothing feminine about it was heard. It was the bishop of Nancy, who had been dozing on a sofa.

During a fancy-dress ball, he noticed a little masked woman, spoke to her, paid her compliments, squeezed her hand, and finally left the crowded ballroom with her. From the Apollo gallery they passed through the blue drawing-room, then the Empress's boudoir; the Emperor opened the little door which led to his private apartment . . . his companion appeared uneasy. The amorous sovereign became pressing, and as he met with resistance, he almost employed force. . . . . "Sire, I implore you . . . you are mistaken. . . . I beg of Your Majesty to listen to me. . . ." But the Emperor would not listen. When the mask was at last removed,

he was astounded to discover that it was the young Duke of R., whose effeminacy had won him the sobriquet of " Mademoiselle."

## CHAPTER XII

### SUITE

NAPOLEON III. was not always so aristocratic in the choice of his favourites, and though the Empress watched her consort jealously, he succeeded in satisfying his caprices even at the Tuileries. So, at all events, says the Marquise de Taisey-Châtenoy.

Someone, probably Bacciochi, praised the charms of a little actress. His curiosity being aroused, he went to the theatre, found that the report concerning *la petite cabotine* was not exaggerated, and told the purveyor of his pleasures to induce the actress to come to the house in the rue d'Astorg, where he was wont to receive his chance inamoratas.

The little actress was more than pretty; she greatly resembled Nell Gwyn, less the big heart that beat for the poor; she was impertinently witty and amused the Emperor, who was continually bored. So while the Empress thought sadly of how hard her poor husband was obliged to work, to fulfil his promise to make the whole population of France

happy, the faithful and discreet coachman Charles, conducted him in the black coupé to his nest in the rue d'Astorg.

"One day," says Mme. de Chatenoy, "the little woman had a fatal caprice; she knew her Emperor only in a dressing-gown, and wished to admire him in his palace, in the midst of the luxury of the Court. Napoleon, prompted by the sentiment of vanity, gave in and gave her the regulation card admitting her to an audience.

"The *petite cabotine*, dressed like a great lady, came to the Tuileries, showed the pass and was admitted. The Chamberlain, the Duc de Bassano, respectfully ushered her through the door leading to the Emperor's cabinet. The beautiful child thought that she would be able to admire her Emperor clad in purple, surrounded by courtiers resplendent in gold-embroidered clothes . . . she was disappointed, for he was hardly more splendid than in the rue d'Astorg. . . . She began to prattle . . . laughed at the Chamberlain who had ushered her in, and made funny remarks. . . . Napoleon smiled indulgently.

"When he received that kind of visitor, it was his custom to lock the door which conducted from his cabinet to the stairs communicating with the Empress's apartments . . . . That day, absent-minded as usual, he forgot that useful precaution. At a moment when the actress had thrown herself on his neck, the little door opened very gently . . . and a smiling face appeared. . . . The smile changed suddenly into an expression of wrath. It was not the Empress, but the Countess

Walewska. . . . The little door closed again noiselessly. . . .

" The girl continued kissing the Emperor, who, remembering just then that the door was not locked, told her that she must be going. The pretty child sighed, but prepared to obey, and she began arranging her hair before a mirror over the mantelpiece. The mirror was too high, so she jumped on to a chair. The Emperor amused himself by admiring her ankles. Suddenly the door which nobody dared to open without the Emperor's order flew back. The Empress, who had disregarded the order, entered, followed by Walewska, who had warned the wife.

" The Emperor stopped admiring the lovely ankles. . . . He said not a word, and lost not a whit of his calm. The poor little actress jumped down from the chair and rushed out. The Emperor explained that it was but a momentary caprice, of no consequence whatever, but he had used the same argument too often. . . . While the Empress grew angry and cried, he merely bent his head and let the storm pass, limiting himself to saying: ' 'Ugenie . . . 'Ugenie . . . you go too far.' . . . 'Ugenie, having said all that which her dignity should have prevented her from saying, suddenly began to sob.

" The Emperor waited for this moment . . . the storm always ended in that way. This time the crisis of sobbing threatened to be protracted. He was annoyed for a moment and ordered her to stop. She revolted, and cried out, still weeping: ' I am going away . . . I shall take Louis. . . .'

" ' If you do that, I shall have you locked up.'

" ' I will do it.'

" ' No, you shall not.'

" ' I shall go mad.'

" ' I am afraid you will.'

" ' Lock me up, if you wish. I shall be less unhappy in a convent or in prison than in this palace, where I am an object of derision.'

" ' 'Ugenie ! '

" ' No, I will never accept this degrading position of a slave who panders to your caprices.'

" ' You know my affection . . .'

" ' I do not believe in it any more. . . I wish to go. . . . I wish to go.'

" ' You forget who you are ! You forget that the least imprudent step on your part will make a scandal.'

" ' If I forget it, you do not think of it either. . . . I wish to go away.'

" ' Where do you wish to go? '

" ' I do not know. . . . I wish to go.'

" ' You will think it over . . . reflection will make you more reasonable.'

" The Empress exhausted her tears, but her resentment remained, and she withdrew with Walewska, leaving the Emperor very annoyed. Eugénie, in her anger, left the Tuileries. The Emperor let her go, and it was announced that she was ill. She travelled *incognito* and visited Scotland, which she had not seen since her nomadic youth. There she distributed many good words and a great number of Sèvres vases. When she returned, they said she had recovered, and a recon-

ciliation took place . . . momentarily. It can be affirmed, though, that she never retaliated."

The Empress of the French was very beautiful, and naturally she aroused many desires, but notwithstanding the defamatory pamphlets published in Germany, there is not a shadow of truth in the allegations made against her. It is true that she was coquettish, especially with her old friends, making one day promises which she withdrew the next, but that was all. Those who believe that every document to be found in the hands of the police is truthworthy will be disappointed to learn that a paper deposited in the archives of the Paris Prefecture, in which it is stated, with all the appearance of truth, that Eugénie had a child before she married Napoleon III., is a malicious invention containing not an atom of truth. She had a great number of admirers, including that brilliant officer who was so madly in love with her that he was ordered to go and serve in Algeria, but not one lover.

The admiration of the Prince von Metternich and of Signor Nigra, then of Viollet-le-Duc and of About, are known, but it is certain that the sentiment of these men never overstepped the bounds of propriety. " Not being able to criticise her conduct, they criticised her words," says Irénée Mauget.

" ' I watch over the virtue of the young girls,' she said one day. ' As to the married women, I care neither for their virtues nor their lapses.'

" When she went out *incognito*, men sometimes followed her with *propos galants*, which amused her

very much. One day, an officer recognised her while she was walking in the Champs-Elysées, and she could not rid herself of him. When they reached the gate of the Tuileries, he took leave of her without embarrassment, showing that he was well aware of her identity.

" Notwithstanding the Emperor's infidelities and all the pain she felt on that account, notwithstanding the assiduity of numerous admirers, notwithstanding the innumerable examples of infidelity she saw every day, it is safe to say that she preserved her wifely dignity untouched."

She became less jealous later, and she said to someone who advised her to mistrust the beautiful women by whom she was so fond of being surrounded: " I must try to amuse the Emperor through the medium of beautiful women."

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SMART SET

WHILE the Court was at Fontainebleau, the Princess von Metternich—who had a great and disastrous influence over the Empress, and who was the source of many innovations, both fortunate and unfortunate, the latter predominating—suggested that the ladies of the Court should go to the races in short skirts.

The Empress applauded the idea. . . .

The short skirts were ordered at once; they were ready to be worn when a lady of the Court—there still remained some ladies—warned the Princess von Metternich that this peculiar and enticing attire, which permitted a view of shapely ankles and calves, would be nothing short of a scandal.

"What wrong will there be if the Empress is also dressed like that?" retorted the Austrian lady.

"No wrong," answered the lady, "but it is not decent that she should show herself so; it does not matter for us. . . . Tell me frankly, would you advise your sovereign, in Austria, to dress like that?"

" That is not the same thing! " exclaimed the Princess. " My Empress is a real one . . . a royal Empress, while yours is only Mlle. de Montijo."

Those words thoroughly characterise the Court of the Second Empire, whose key-note was vulgarity.

The Count de Vieil-Castel speaks of the Austrian lady in the following manner: " The Princess Metternich has assumed the manners and the *ton* of a strumpet, and yet is the Empress's favourite; she drinks, she smokes, she swears, she is ugly enough to frighten one, and she tells stories! "

Irénée Mauget says of her: " Her mouth was too big, and her turned-up nostrils spoiled the harmony of her face, but gave her *du piquant*." " *C'est une jolie laide*," people said of her. She lashed and bit with her wit, which though often brutal, was sometimes fine.

The Princess von Metternich was the wife of the Austrian Ambassador, who was a son of the Metternich who took such good care of the son of Napoleon I. The turbulent and daring Princess was the originator of that disastrous whirlwind of *fêtes*, eccentricities, vulgarities and exaggerated luxury of which, among a thousand examples, these two paragraphs taken from a letter of Colonel Verly given an excellent idea:

" The Princess von Metternich made fashionable dances given in gardens transformed into ballrooms, lighted by thousands of multi-coloured lamps. Trees, houses and dancers are enveloped in a blaze of Bengal lights, which give to certain places some-

PRINCESS VON METTERNICH

times the aspect of true paradises, to others of the infernal habitations of Lucifer. The result of this new fashion is that those who have no drawing-rooms on the ground floor are obliged to spend sixty to eighty thousand francs to build up an aerial garden, on a level with the first floor. Paris seems to have become a modern Babylon, of which the amiable Princess von Metternich is the Semiramis."

It was the Princess von Metternich who also made it fashionable for *grandes dames* and ordinary ladies to visit doubtful restaurants, and this deplorable fashion has been transmitted to our generation.

When the Court was at Compiègne or Fontainebleau, and the evening was too dull, the Princess would whisper to a dozen of her best friends that she would retire under the pretext of a headache, and that they should follow, each with a gay cavalier, to her apartment, where the headache was soon subjugated by music and dancing.

One evening, when the merriment was at its height, the doors were thrown open to admit the Empress, who came to enquire how poor Pauline's headache was. Instead of being amused at the lively scene which she beheld, she was annoyed and accused the Princess in angry words of having failed in respect to her. The wife of the Austrian diplomatist answered with equal wrath: "Madam, you forget that I came into the world *grande dame;* I will suffer no reprimand to be addressed to me."

She gave once a *fête* in the Empress' honour, during which she, the Princess von Metternich, assisted by a dancing-master, performed *le pas du*

*diable à quartre!* After the dances, ballet-girls in tights came down from the stage and mingled with the guests.

She professed to be so fond of the Empress of the French, that one day, when Eugénie spoke of her admiration for Marie-Antoinette, the Princess von Metternich exclaimed: "I should so like to be your Princess de Lamballe!"

To give an idea of the mad extravagance of those days, it may be recorded that the Countess de Pourtalès—famous for her thick fair hair, her expressive blue eyes, her lovely complexion and fine figure—spent 50,000 francs on flowers to decorate her palace for one of the brilliant *fêtes* for which she was famed.

Often fortunes were spent on frocks. The husbands were ruined, and, in order to recoup themselves, speculated; sometimes they did not take the trouble to do that, and simply borrowed from the Jews.

A certain banker from Frankfort used to help the spendthrift ladies; he took advantage of the position given him by his services and got himself invited to the most aristocratic drawing-rooms, and even to Court. His wife, who was quite pretty and very liberal in the distribution of her charms, made the circle of their friends still larger.

During one Court ball the guests noticed that the Jewish Baron, usually very quiet, was very excited and kept wandering to and fro through the drawing-rooms. They asked him the cause of his perplexity: "I am looking for my wife; she has disappeared." "Are you jealous?" "Oh, no!

One always finds the wife, but she has 100,000 francs worth of jewelry on her, and I do not know with whom she has gone; one never knows what may happen." This at the Imperial Court!

The craving for pleasure was excessive; very often both courtiers and guests behaved very badly. The Earl of Malmesbury, in this connection, wrote on November 14, 1857: "The English ladies who went to Compiègne for the *fêtes* have just returned, and seem to have been greatly amused. They were struck by the freedom of conversation and manners of the Court, which (freedom) is most remarkable in Princess Mathilde. Their forgetfulness of all *convenances* is quite incredible, and in more than one instance excited the disgust of the guests."

Then, under the date of November 15, 1857: "I returned to Paris in the Royal carriage—a large omnibus—the party being M. and Mme. de Morny; M. and Mme. Walewski; and two ladies-in-waiting, one of whom, Mme. de Pierre, an American *née* Thorne, and the Duchess de Morny, a Russian, just married, smoked all the way in the Empress' face. . . . The *genre* of the women about her, with the exception of Mme. Walewska, is vile. Their hair is dragged off their faces so tightly that they can hardly shut their eyes, and their scarlet accoutrements, jackets, cloaks, etc., as they happen to be very fair, made an *ensemble* indescribably unbecoming."

The Emperor was not very gay. He could not sustain a long conversation, so that evenings were tedious at the Court; but when he was out and the Empress was in a good humour, they gossiped with

pleasure, the Princess von Metternich being the leader. She was ably seconded by the Marquis de Caux (afterwards the husband of Adelina Patti), who told stories that were more than *risquées*.

Count Tascher de la Pagerie, besides being First Chamberlain, was also the Court Buffoon. Sometimes, interrupting the conversation, the Empress would say to him: "Count, do imitate a turkey-cock." And immediately the buffoon imitated the gobbling bird by clucking and strutting—in a word, was more a turkey than the bird itself.

"Imitate the sun," the Empress would say to him, and the Chamberlain, by means of the most stupid grimaces, became the sun. "Imitate the moon." He would assume a silly expression and say, while his naturally heavy features became even more leaden: "Here is the moon."

A still more vulgar amusement of the Court of those times was the game called *Cheval fondu*. It was played in the following manner:

A man would kneel down and put his head in the lap of a woman who was seated; while he was in that position, men and women would mount his back until he could stand no more; then all rolled on the floor together, in a droll *pêle-mêle*.

Then there were the *tableaux vivants* and the *charades*, in which the most beautiful women of the Court would take part. For the former, purity and nudity of form were demanded, while for interpreting the *charades* very daring poses were assumed.

The Count de Vieil-Castel says: "The Court amuses itself at Compiègne; the Duchesse de la

Pagerie gives *tableaux vivants*, trashy *charades* and other trifles, while that lively little monster, Princess von Metternich, dances in ballets."

"You cannot imagine," wrote Mérimée to Princess Julie, "what I suffered on account of the *charades* at Compiègne, of which you wrote me. While writing this vile stuff I was thinking of those German song-writers who composed immoral *chansons* in order to earn money for their wives' funerals."

One day the talented and much-abused author signed himself: Prospère Mérimée, Her Majesty's buffoon.

The vulgarity was apparently universal. The Count de Vieil-Castel, speaking of a dinner at which he was present at the Tuileries, says: "The Princess of Belgrade forced attention on herself by speaking loudly, *avec des sous-entendus risqués*, using such trivial expressions as: 'Oh, public opinion! *Ce que je m'en moque!*' 'This is a decent house: well kept, *service correcte*, *table soignée*.' . . . And after such utterances, she would look round in order to judge the effect she had produced, and as if to say, 'You see how witty I am!'"

Notwithstanding the very limited and not over-refined faculties of her mind, it was she who so admirably characterised the vulgarity of life in Paris when she said: "When I am here, it seems to me that I am at an inn."

During dinner the conversation was very free; the men told stories for which the French description *salées* is inadequate. The Marquise de Taisey-

Châtenoy tells us that one evening, at a dinner-party, Princess Mathilde was told by General Fleury of an adventure which had happened to a senator while on an official mission. The tale was *grivois*, and the princess laughed so much that she had to put a napkin into her mouth in order to stop her hysterical laughter . . . then she begged the humorous General to cease: "I beg of you, be quiet . . . *vous allez me faire p . . . pleurer*."

There was an orderly officer to the Emperor, by the name of Duperré. His great accomplishment was to make bread pellets and to flick them so adroitly that they would always fall into the mouth of the Prince Imperial, who was seated opposite the officer. This amusement, innocent though it may be, could hardly be called refined, even by the most indulgent people. One must sympathise with the Count de Vieil-Castel when he gave vent to his indignation, and said: "The aristocrats of the Imperial Court puff themselves up more and more. They have good reason for doing so! Vachon de Belmont has taken an oath that he will become fatter than an ox, and that he will have more crosses on his chest than there were on Calvary . . ."

The taste at the Court was so low that the ladies did not mind being called *caillettes*. This word, which is not to be found in the dictionary of the French Academy, is not a diminutive of *caille*—quail—but derivates from *canaille*. It was General Fleury who invented the word. He used it for the first time when Mlle. de Beusman appeared at Court, describing her as *canaillette*. The courtiers

found the word charming, but the Empress thought it too long and shortened it to *caillette*.

When the Chamberlain-buffoon did not imitate the cries of various birds and animals, the courtiers amused themselves by giving each other nicknames. Thus, the Countess de Vanves was called *carpette*—a little carp; Mme. de Vaugirard, *mouchette*—a little fly; Mme. d'Auteuil, *grenouillette*—a little frog; the Vicomtesse de Passy, *crapodine*—toadlet; Mme. de Saint-Calais, *tête-d'épingle*, on account of her thin figure surmounted by a big head; Mme. de Saint-Brieux was *l'Incomplète*.

Of course, the defective education of the Empress, and especially the nomadic life which she had led before her marriage, did not contribute to the superior refinement that one expects to find in a Sovereign, and the Latin saying, *quo semel imbuta est semper odorem servabit testa*, proved undeniably true in her case.

The already-quoted detective of the Imperial police said in his diary on April 5th, 1855: "She cannot forget the habits of extreme freedom contracted before her marriage. It even happens sometimes that she behaves in a childish manner curiously in contrast with her present elevation. The story is told that recently she went with the Emperor to visit a garden. During the walk he bent to examine a plant. The Empress thought it funny to push her august consort from behind, causing him to fall."

That excessive love of freedom often made Eugénie forget that she was an Empress. One day in the forest, on the hills of Sables d'Arbonnes, she

tucked her skirts between her legs, sat down, and slid down the smooth slope, shouting: "Follow me who can!"

Her followers imitated her, and the result was the picturesque and edifying spectacle of court ladies tumbling over each other at the foot of the hill, petticoats flying and hair dishevelled.

Another time, while at Fontainebleau for her Saint's day, which was on November 15th, the Empress conceived a mad desire to go to a rustic dance in the village. She communicated her fancy to one of the ladies of the palace, who secured two peasants' costumes. In the evening, they drove in a carriage to the edge of the forest, changed their clothes in a hut, ran to the village and entered the tent in which the lads made their lasses dance.

Soon they were noticed by some workmen, who invited them to dance. The ladies refused, laughing, but the men were not to be discouraged . . . they seemed excited, and, without being rough, they pressed the two ladies to dance and to drink with them. One of them, a big, strapping fellow, put his arm round the Empress' waist . . . another kissed her lady-in-waiting. The situation became critical.

The Empress had made her *suivante* take an oath not to reveal the secret of their adventure to anyone, but she, frightened at her responsibility, had told everything to her husband. He, in his turn, communicated with two friends, and the three men followed quietly behind. The husband, seeing a man kissing his wife, intervened, but the workman would not give up, and there followed a lively fight,

during which wigs and artificial beards were pulled from the heads and chins of the Court dignitaries.

When the Emperor learned of this adventure, he scolded the Empress, who defended herself by reminding him that Marie-Antoinette had " indulged in similar pranks " !

" The Empress goes a bit too far," wrote the Count de Vieil-Castel. " By overriding convention, as she does, she commits follies which are forbidden to crowned heads, and which would hardly become even a simple mortal."

## CHAPTER XIV

### BIARRITZ

WHEN the Parisian season was over, that is to say, after the *Grand Prix*, the Court passed the beginning of the summer at the charming Château de Saint-Cloud, of which there remains to-day only sad ruins and the beautiful park.

Notwithstanding the natural and artistic beauty of Saint-Cloud, the Empress preferred Biarritz, as being nearer to her native country. It was she who, during her vagabond life, discovered the beauty of the shore of Biarritz, and when capricious Fortune put the Imperial crown on her head and made her almost omnipotent in the country, she assured the prosperity of the town by ordering a " Villa Eugénie " to be built for her there.

From that moment Biarritz—that El Dorado of *cocottes* and millionaires—was " discovered."

Eugénie was very hospitable in Biarritz, as elsewhere, and received a great deal of promiscuous company which made that old grumbler, the Count de Vieil-Castel, say that " the people she invited were very curious," while Prospère Mérimée, true

Bohemian that he was, wrote on September 27th, 1862 : " There is not a castle in France or England where one is so perfectly at liberty and free from etiquette, or one that has such a thorough and amiable châtelaine."

Of course, her countrymen flocked to Biarritz, where they were heartily welcomed by the Empress, and looked on with scorn by her French courtiers.

A young French nobleman, noticing three small, swarthy Spanish grandees, very much infatuated with their own grandeur, walking through the drawing-rooms of the Imperial residence, with their heads raised high and a haughty air, turned to a friend, saying : " Who are those coloured men? "

" They are the *Blagadores y habladores de la Mendacitas di tra los montes y Pyreneos;* they keep their hats on their heads before their king—if they have one—and here they hold them out to get a few gold pieces from their cousin, our gracious sovereign."

Unfortunately, their conversation was overheard by the Empress, whose national pride was hurt, and she demanded of the Emperor that they should be dismissed from the posts they held under the Government. Napoleon resisted at first, but then gave in for the sake of peace.

The Marquise de Taisey-Châtenoy tells us that, as life was somewhat dull at such a small place as Biarritz, the masculine part of the Court would take leave of the sovereigns at about eleven o'clock in the evening, escape clandestinely from the watering-place, and go to Bayonne for enjoyment. The

ladies of the Court, notwithstanding the late hour, did not think of sleeping, and complained of their abandonment to the Empress, who interrogated the culprits: "Gentlemen, what do you do every evening at Bayonne?"

Taken by surprise, they remained silent, then one of them answered: "Madam, we go to call on the Bishop." The Empress did not press the matter further, but when the Bishop of Bayonne came to pay his respects to the sovereigns, she said to him: "I am angry with you, my lord, for taking away the gentlemen every evening; my ladies are dissatisfied." The prelate, who was very keen, replied that in the future he would discontinue his nocturnal receptions.

Pierre de Lano has left us a story which shows the capricious fancy and not very exalted taste of the Empress of the French.

"One evening, accompanied by her intimate courtiers of both sexes, she was seized with a fancy to climb over the wall of the Villa Eugénie and enter the neighbouring property, near which passed a road much frequented by people taking evening strolls. There, taking hold of a stick—those who followed her having done the same—she watched near the fence, and when anyone came near, walking slowly, she gave them a blow with her stick and then hid behind the fence. This game lasted some minutes. But one of the victims of this trick, less patient than the others, began to shout, and determined to know who the perpetrator of the jest was. He made such an uproar that the owner of the property appeared, joined the plaintiff, and

began an energetic hunt for the Empress and her companions. When the party reached the wall of the Villa Eugénie, an equerry was obliged to serve as a ladder for the Empress and her ladies, and he himself had hardly time to escape from the infuriated pursuers."

Madame Carette tells us that the Empress loved dangerous excursions, and showed great courage in moments of peril. One morning she decided to make a sea excursion to San Sebastian; the Emperor disliked that kind of distraction. She embarked with the Prince Imperial, Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, the daughters of the Duchess of Alba, Mlles. Marion, Corvisart and Mme. Carette. Suddenly the wind rose, the sea became rough, and the captain said that he could not make Biarritz, but would have to go to Saint-Jean-de-Luz, which was reached just before nightfall. The shore being rocky, the ship could not go close in, and boats were launched. The one in which the Empress was seated was in charge of an inexperienced sailor, and the result was that it was wrecked on a rock.

The anxiety was great; the Empress, holding her son in her arms, and helped by the sailors, was able to reach the rock, and stood there in the midst of the roaring waves. Finally, an old sea-dog entered the water, and said that it was possible to make a human chain to land. The Empress and her ladies were passed from arm to arm by the sailors, and soon found themselves on solid ground.

The Empress was often seized with an irresistible longing for Spanish manners and customs, as well

as the language of her childhood. She frequently made little excursions into Spain from Biarritz, and charmed the peasants with her amiability, as she spoke Spanish to them and was lavish in her gifts.

That hearty welcome suggested to her the idea of going to Madrid, where she could appear as the equal of the Queen whose subject she had been. Mérimée, her loyal old friend, used all his power to persuade her to abandon the plan, for he feared that she would not be received as well as she anticipated, and that the press might be rude to her.

He wrote to his friend Panizzi: "The devil which presides over our affairs has sent us the Imperial yacht *Aigle*, and persuaded us to circumnavigate the Iberian peninsula. . . . They are going to Lisbon to see if the Queen was well brought to bed, then visit Cadiz, Malaga and Granada, and return by way of Marseilles.

"There is nothing inconvenient in the trip to Portugal, but in Andalusia things are more grave: a quantity of cousins, the Duc de Montpensier at San Lucar or Seville; the Spanish elections. Cortuna, ex-minister of Finance, whom I met in Bayonne, told me that the arrival of Her Majesty in Andalusia might become an occasion for very grave disorder. She will be received in a scandalous or dangerous manner."

Mérimée was not listened to, although his fears were justified, for the inhabitants of Madrid received their country-woman badly. The Empress was insulted with hostile shouts, and it was found necessary to abandon a bull-fight which was on the programme of the Imperial visit in 1863.

This hostile attitude of the Spaniards is a very curious psychological problem, and difficult to explain.

If Eugénie's *amour propre* was hurt by the hostility shown to her by the populace, it was flattered by the reception she received from the Queen of Spain, and perhaps still more by the adulatory article written by the United States Ambassador in Madrid to an American paper :

" When one has spent a whole year in Madrid, as I have, where evil tongues, both in high and lower circles, have whispered so many defamatory reports respecting the Empress Eugénie, in spite of what one has heard of her extraordinary beauty, one is not too ready to yield oneself a captive in the expectation of meeting her. A great, if not the greatest, power of attraction that beauty can exercise certainly consists in the fact that we can associate it with purity and loveliness of soul.

" I hate the Empire and everything connected with it with all my heart. Moreover, I believe I am right that the Empress has come to Spain, and especially to the Court, to pave the way for a union, or, at all events, for cordial co-operation, in Mexican intrigue. I was, therefore, but little disposed to succumb to her charms ; besides, I trusted in the strength of my prejudice, with which I felt I was fully armed.

" At a gala performance in the theatre, I saw her for a few minutes in a very poor light, but still I came to the conclusion that it was quite worth while to study her appearance more closely.

" When I met her yesterday in the hall of the

Embassy, simply dressed, wearing her hat, and speaking Spanish, her features lighted up, and fingers, fan and little feet all in animated movement as she talked, I lay down my arms on the spot; I lost the battle at the first onslaught!

"Yes, she is beautiful, more lovely than words can express!

"And how sparkling she was at the banquet that evening!

"I did not sit opposite her; that seat was occupied by the Queen of Spain; but still I was placed so that I could see her well. The lady by my side, the wife of an ambassador, an Englishwoman by birth, the mother of grown-up children, and of perfectly correct morals, who had frequently seen the Empress five or six years ago, told me that she is now even far more lovely than she was then. She was simply enraptured with her, and exclaimed with enthusiasm: 'Does she not deserve a throne, if only for her beauty?'

"The Empress is of middle height, not so tall as her portrait led me to suppose, slight and supple, but at the same time comely. She has the figure of a girl, the very model of a Hebe. Her bust, neck, shoulders, arms, and especially her hands, are incomparably beautiful, and she has the grace of an Andalusian *danseuse*.

"But, to gain the very best impression of her, one must hear her converse in Spanish. On account of her Scotch descent, she naturally speaks English like her mother-tongue, and she is perfectly fluent in French; but these two languages she speaks with her mouth only.

" She was talking to the King with great animation, and eyes, mouth, hands, and especially her pretty fingers, seemed to be equally expressive, and to impart to her words the very essence of their meaning and importance.

" How completely she put the good Queen in the shade this evening! Isabella is three or four years her junior, but how terribly Bourbon she looked!

" After coffee, an informal reception was held in the royal drawing-room, when Their Majesties simply bowed to most of the guests and exchanged a few words with one here and there as they stood in rows or groups. The Queen dragged herself from one to the other, nodding and smiling in her usual friendly manner; Eugénie, on the contrary, flitted from one to another, going up close, almost affectionately, to some, and chatting in the most winsome way.

" But the contrast was the most apparent when they took leave and turned to bow to the guests. The Queen set her whole body in motion, and nodded her head as familiarly as any citizen's wife; but Eugénie turned towards them in all her graceful charm, placed her feet firmly, and then stood bending the upper part of her body back and bringing it forward again, with the easiest, prettiest movement from side to side, like a swan curving its neck: then, without turning, she slowly withdrew backwards to the doorway. In this way she copied to perfection the wonderful swaying movement of the upper part of the body in which the Andalusian *danseuses* are inimitable.

" And her dress! The ladies contemplated it in

silent awe, and even grave diplomatists were in raptures about the arrangement and adorning of her hair.

" Perhaps for an Empress she was too much of a coquette, but as an Andalusian, which she is, and looked upon simply as a woman, she was the most perfect creation I have seen anywhere."

There can be no doubt that Eugénie was beautiful; even the cold English diplomatist, Lord Malmesbury, says, under the date of November 27, 1853, that " the Empress looked handsomer than ever." He also mentions her *réverence circulaire*, as the Court used to call her single bow, combined with one smiling glance in which she included all who were present. This was one of the Empress' social triumphs, and never failed to excite admiration.

There are no contemporary testimonies as to the Empress' English, but as to her French, the cultured Marquise de Taisey-Châtenoy says : " Her voice was rude, hard, and she spoke with a foreign accent which was more English than Spanish." The writer, moreover, laughs at her pronounciation of the French word *pelouse*, which she made to sound like *pailouse*.

Perhaps the American Ambassador was too hyperbolical in his praise. This is a fault often met with in his country.

## CHAPTER XV

### CAPRICES

THERE are a great many instances which prove that the Count de Vieil-Castel was not unjust when he said, censuringly: "The Empress follows the caprices of her fancy as a woman, and not the exigencies of her rôle as a sovereign."

Pierre de la Gorce gives the following instance of her disconcerting capriciousness:

One day, when accompanied by de Verly, she noticed one of the magnificent Cent Gardes sentries standing motionless before the Castle. Turning to the Colonel, she remarked: "I am convinced that this statuesque pose of your men is mere affectation, and that it would take very little to upset it." "Your Majesty may test the matter for yourself," was the reply. She frowned, and, speaking harshly, reproached the guardsman for his lack of smartness. Seeing that she did not succeed in moving him, she boxed his ears; he did not move, or utter a sound. The next day she sent him five hundred francs.

Albert de Verly relates another story:

"On the evening of a ball at the Tuileries, the

famous *coiffeur* Félix went to dress the hair of Mme. X, but, having forgotten certain necessary articles, took from his carriage the ornaments which he had ready for the Empress, saying to himself that he would invent something else for the sovereign.

"When in the evening Mme. X appeared in the drawing-room of the Tuileries, she created a sensation. A little later the Empress entered. She walked straight up to Mme. X and said to her: 'Madame, who dressed your hair?' The lady replied: 'It was Félix, Your Majesty's *coiffeur*.' 'Thank you; that will do.' The Empress never forgave Mme. X for having employed her *coiffeur*, and especially for having worn the *coiffure* which should have been hers."

The Marquise de Taisey-Châtenoy says that the Empress was lacking in *esprit*, and that when she wished to show that she had it, she simply became clumsy. In support of this, she tells the following story:

"One evening she turned to M. de B., an unfortunate husband who had forgiven his wife's last lapse; she made fun of his misfortune, excused his wife on account of the seductive qualities of her lover, and praised the indulgent husband. The courtiers surrounding her laughed. The husband grew pale, but, having regained his calm, he said with apparent simplicity: 'Madam, you are perfectly right. There exist both men and women who are extraordinarily endowed in every way and know no obstacles. There is no resisting certain women; that is why many husbands forgive unfortunate wives, who allow themselves to be carried

away by passion. It would be better were all men and women alike, for there would be fewer bad *ménages*. Then wives would excuse their husbands when they were carried away by passion. . . . It seems, for instance, that at the present moment a vile creature sows discord in more than one *ménage* . . . her name is Marguerite Bellanger. . . .' There was a great noise of chairs being moved . . . some of the courtiers coughed. . . . One of the ladies saved the situation by going to the window and saying to the Prince Imperial: 'Monseigneur, come and see; it is snowing and the trees are all white.' Everybody looked at the trees covered with snow. But it was less cold in the garden than in the drawing-room."

The Empress often spoke abstractedly. One day, when visiting an Art Exhibition, she stopped before a statue representing Chastity: it was a very young girl whose form was very slender. "How narrow those shoulders are," she said, pouting.

Her guide, the sculptor Nieuwerkerke, defended the artist, saying that the slenderness rendered the meaning of the work better. "One can be very modest, without being so narrow," answered the Empress.

The Empress had a great veneration for Saint Teresa, and one day, during a lively conversation, she maintained that she was a direct descendant of the great Spanish saint.

"In direct line?" queried Napoleon.

"Yes!"

"Are you certain of it?"

" Certain."

" But Saint Teresa died a maiden," said the Emperor, smiling maliciously, and they talked about something else.

When she stood on her dignity as a sovereign, instead of being just the free and unconventional Mlle. de Montijo, she assumed a haughty and affected mien, sat in a throne-like armchair which nobody dared approach without being asked to do so by a chamberlain, and watched over the reception. The Count de Vieil-Castel says: " The Empress confounds dignity with superciliousness; she fears lest people should find out that she is not sufficiently an Empress, and she is disdainful without reason."

The artificiality of her assumed royal air was discovered by the Marquise de Taisey-Châtenoy during an audience which she describes in the following manner:

" The Empress was alone, the Emperor having gone out. Her Majesty was sitting, or rather, reclining in a deep low armchair; her feet were placed on a footstool which brought her knees up very high. Her attire seemed to me very simple; she wore no jewels save a clover-shaped emerald and diamond brooch. Her hair, tightly and smoothly combed, was drawn from the temples and coiled on the nape of her neck."

The *mise-en-scène* of the Empress' reception was always prepared to the smallest detail. It was done by her reader and maid.

" On her lap there was an open book; she played with a large paper-knife of ebony, which she applied

constantly to her cheeks and hands, as a foil to her fresh complexion. On a table near by there was a large inkstand with a quill and a note-book with gilded edges; then notes, the file of the audiences of the day and affairs in which she took an interest. She played the official personage with childish satisfaction.

" Her Majesty nodded to me graciously and told me to be seated. Then she took from the table notes concerning the object of my audience, with which she seemed to become immediately familiar.

" ' You are from Burgundy, madam? '

" ' Yes, madam.'

" ' It is a beautiful country.'

" I bowed.

" ' Tell your friends the Burgundians that the Emperor thinks much of them.'

" The voice was rude, harsh, and she spoke with a foreign accent that was more English than Spanish.

" I rose, curtseyed three times, and went out.

" In the pink drawing-room I found the ladies of the Palace, chatting with those awaiting audiences. Through the slightly open door I could hear the beginning of another audience.

" ' You are from Lorraine, madam? '

" ' Yes, madam.'

" ' It is a beautiful country. . . . Tell your friends of Lorraine how much the Emperor thinks of them.'

" I looked at the Viscountess Aguado; she smiled maliciously and led me out.

" I remember the details of my audience well—

the doubtful cleanliness of that blue drawing-room, the smell of tobacco, the crying of a child in another room—and I wondered how this home would look if the surroundings were less expensive and of a less exalted order."

One of the Empress' principal pastimes was arranging the papers—very often important ones—which Napoleon threw carelessly on one side. There were a great number of them, and it occupied a considerable portion of her time to classify them and to put them in order. The Emperor smiled on her mania, and she herself used often to make merry about it. "I am like a mouse at the Emperor's side," she would say, "I gather up all the crumbs."

Another of the Empress' amusements was painting in water-colour, of which the Marquise de Taisey-Châtenoy says: "The Empress colours *images d'Epinal* and calls them water-colour paintings."

In the summer, when Eugénie was bored at Saint-Cloud, she would sometimes ride, accompanied only by the Princess von Metternich.

One day, etiquette weighing heavily on her, the Empress again became Mlle. de Montijo, and satisfied her democratic fancy by a drive to Paris on the top of an omnibus. This prank was also carried out in company with the Princess von Metternich.

At times, she was sad without apparent reason, and had attacks of bad humour which were difficult to explain.

When she received the good news about the war in China, she wrote: "I thought that I was no

longer capable of feeling deeply; but joy, like sorrow, hurts when one feels exhausted."

Another time she wrote:

"The physicians wish to cure the body before they cure the soul: this is impossible."

## CHAPTER XVI

### SPIRITUALISM

IN order to drive away *ennui*, both sovereigns, for the Emperor also looked like an *eternel ennuyé*, had recourse to remedies not always in the best of taste. It was in that way that the scandalous influence of the spiritualist Hume began at the Court.

Hume claimed to be an American, but in all probability he was a German spy. He succeeded in becoming very intimate with the sovereigns, and, of course, their entourage became infatuated with the man who made the table dance and spirits talk.

One day, in the presence of the sovereigns and the King of Bavaria, he was trying to make a table turn, but it remained motionless. He then exclaimed: "There are here two unbelievers: Count Walewski and the Duc de Bassano. They must leave the room if we are to obtain any results." The Duke and the Count disliked Hume, and believed him to be a dangerous adventurer . . . he avenged himself on them. The Emperor asked them to go out, Hume acted, and the table turned.

Hume asked one of the ladies: "Would you like

to shake hands with someone whom you have loved or whom you have lost? " She answered that she would like to shake hands with her father, and when told to put her hand under the table, felt the touch of cold fingers. Everybody, including the Emperor, was awestruck, while the King of Bavaria made the sign of the cross.

According to Lord Malmesbury, Napoleon was a firm believer in spiritualism. One day he talked with Morny, Pietri and Malmesbury, and said that certain pictures in the Louvre were erroneously attributed to great masters. " Let us ask Hume to call up Titian's soul," suggested Malmesbury. Pietri and Morny took advantage of this ironical remark to chaff the Emperor's credulity, at which he was very displeased.

One morning, in Fontainebleau, the Empress asked Hume to make a table talk; the table remained silent, but in the meantime a storm broke out and hail fell heavily. Finally, the table spoke and said in an angry voice : " What are you doing here? It is Sunday, and you should be in church." The Empress was frightened, and went to Mass.

Pierre de Lano tells the following story :

" A charming man, the Marquis de B. . . ., took a great fancy to Hume, and begged him on several occasions to let him see again a woman whom he had loved very much and who was dead. The American finally consented, and one day told the Marquis to come to his flat. Hume ushered the nobleman into a room, conducted him to a couch and left him.

" What happened then? The hero of this tragic

adventure could alone answer the question, but he was not able to do so, for he was dead. Had the Marquis seen that which he desired? Or was he only the victim of a mad hallucination, and had his unhinged mind collapsed suddenly? When Hume entered the room, the Marquis de B. . . was lying at the foot of the couch, lifeless. He had succumbed to heart-failure.

"In the Emperor's entourage, after this incident, the question of putting a stop to the spiritualist's activity was raised, but the Empress intervened in favour of her protégé, and Hume was more sought after than before. He would not leave the Empress; he followed her to Saint-Cloud, to Biarritz, to Fontainebleau and to Compiègne, making tables speak and chairs dance.

One day the Marquise de Taisey-Châtenoy was waiting for an audience in the pink drawing-room: "I was waiting patiently. . . . Through the door I could hear laughter, exclamations followed by a sudden silence; then a quick noise of feet running on the carpet, and muffled blows. A loud voice dominated the others; I heard incomprehensible interjections; after a silence, the noise began again, and then stopped. What was happening there?

"The door opened; Mme. Aguado appeared. 'Ah! it is you?' She closed the door, and, a moment later, returned. Her Majesty had been advised of my presence, and I could enter. 'We are making the table turn,' Mme. Aguado said to me. 'Come and join us.' And, seeing that I hesitated: 'It is Her Majesty's wish.' I took off

my hat and my mantle and went in. A table in the centre of the drawing-room ; four persons round it : the Emperor, the Empress, Magnesia, the Empress' chamberlain, Mme. Aguado. . . . I was the fifth. The Empress inclined her head ; I felt that the Emperor looked at me . . . this was all. Nobody could leave their place, or raise their hands from the table.

" I was familiar with table-turning, so I took off my gloves quickly and went to the empty space at the table between Mme. Aguado and Magnesia. Our united hands filled the table with fluid, and it began to move. The Empress questioned : ' Are we in complete number this time? ' The table raised itself slightly and one of its legs rapped the floor. ' Will you talk now? ' ' Yes.' The Empress' table was called Josephine. That day it was a little capricious, its language was not easily understood.

" The Empress seemed irritated by that long *séance;* she became seriously angry, speaking to Josephine harshly, asking what was the cause of its being continually distracted.

" ' I am busy,' Josephine answered.

" ' Where? '

" ' At the Princess de Belgrade's.'

" ' What are you doing? '

" ' Pasqueline is being punished.'

" Pasqueline was the Princess' eldest daughter. The Empress ordered a messenger to be sent immediately to the Princess' residence in order to get the news confirmed. We left the table, for it was apparently impossible to get any good news out of

Josephine that day. The Emperor lit a cigarette and left us without bowing, without saying a word, twisting his moustache. The Empress sat in her low armchair and suppressed a slight yawn.

" ' Magnesia, do amuse us,' she said to her Chamberlain. At that moment I heard the barking of a little dog; I turned so quickly that they all began to laugh. The dog varied his barking; he was pleased, he was angry; we could hear him scratching the floor. One moment he was in one corner, then in another, behind a chair, under the table. Magnesia—for he it was—showed off this little parlour trick, and, to do him justice, he did possess a great talent for imitating certain animals. He was very proud of this achievement and very much flattered to see us laugh heartily.

" Then the messenger sent to the Princess de Belgrade's returned. Pasqueline, for some little piece of mischief, had been forbidden to go out. None of those present at the *séance* had had any communication either with the Princess or with her people. Let those who understand this explain it."

Hume's familiarity with the Empress became so scandalous that a strenuous effort was made by a certain number of people, headed by Walewski, to get rid of him at any price, and one reads in the Count de Vieil-Castel's Memoirs the following paragraph:

" The famous Hume, the man with second sight, the American who turned tables and the heads of the Parisians, who conjured up dead people before the Emperor and the Empress, has been sent to the

prison of Mazas as a thief and moral leper, and finally expelled from France in order to avoid the scandal of criminal proceedings against him, in which so many people would be entangled."

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE QUEEN OF FASHION

THE Empress of the French was famous for her rich and tasteful toilettes.

In her early youth she was fond of originating startling costumes. In Madrid people had been content to envy her; no one had dared to adopt her extravagant style.

It was otherwise at the watering-places which she frequented, where clumsy imitations of the original Spaniard were not infrequently to be seen on the promenade, at the gaming-tables, or in the *salons* of the hotels.

Her influence in Paris was apparent immediately on her arrival: before it was suspected that she would become Napoleon's wife, the Parisian ladies adopted the high-heeled boot which she launched at the Emperor's hunting-parties: her waistcoats were copied and sold in the fashionable shops.

No sooner had Eugénie de Montijo ascended the throne of France than she grasped the sceptre of fashion as well, and became not only Empress of the French, but also the ruling dressmaker of the country—nay, of the world.

" At the commencement of the Empire," says Mme. Carette, " the fashions were very peculiar. Modern ladies of fashion who dress their slim bodies with skirts narrowly draped would tremble with horror if they had to appear in such finery as was then in vogue, and which was supported by a kind of frame with pliable steel springs, the size of which would scarcely admit of three women to be seated, or stand, at the same time, in the boudoir of a small house."

This ugly contrivance was transformed by Eugénie, with the help of Worth, a Yorkshireman, into the crinoline.

On May 17, 1860, Mérimée wrote : " The crinoline is *en décadence*. In two years' time the frocks will be so shortened that those women who have natural advantages will be preferred to those who have not." He was a good prophet. The crinoline did disappear—although not so soon as he predicted. It lasted until the reign of Eugénie herself as sovereign was nearly ended.

Helped by Mme. Virot, Eugénie also transformed hats. First, she set the neck at liberty by suppressing the *bavelot*, a stiff headgear which fell on, and cramped, the neck and shoulders. Then hats gave place to *capotes à bride*, a kind of flattened hood, which encircled the face very prettily.

It is evident that as Eugénie's extraordinary career and beauty had turned on her the attention of the whole world, the evolution of her toilettes was watched and followed.

Twice a year the Empress of the French renewed

her frocks, and this was the origin of to-day's changeability of fashion, now followed slavishly by women. However, there was one redeeming point in Eugénie, which one hardly finds in any modern woman—she was not the slave of her dressmaker. She was never satisfied with toilettes made according to the taste of shop-keepers; she criticised, altered and rejected incessantly, until her good taste was satisfied. She would never have accepted the supreme argument of the modern dressmaker or milliner: "That is the fashion now." She was her own arbiter of fashion.

She had countless conferences with Mme. Virot and Worth, whose career she made; he frequently sent her gowns that cost 100,000 or 200,000 francs, and made her pay as much as 50,000 francs for a simple little cloak. But even his creations, one might almost say works of art, did not content the Empress in their original form; they had to be altered again and again, according to her directions, until her own correct taste, which became more and more developed by practice, succeeded in producing a perfectly harmonious effect.

Her feminine friends and admirers followed her in her extravagant changeability, even if not her good taste. Mme. Carette says:

"Whether at the Tuileries or any other residence, the Empress was always dressed plainly, much more so than is the case in our days with very many young women in a far less exalted station. She was almost always attired in plain black *faille*. When driving in Paris the Empress always put on

a very elegant mantle and a well-fitting and becoming hat."

But when she received she was attired in very rich gowns, nearly always made of thick silk of Lyons manufacture. These were what the Empress used to call her "political toilettes," for by popularising them she sought to foster the prosperity of the silk manufacturers.

It would be unjust to accuse Eugénie of all the extravagances to which vanity has led the women of to-day, but it can be stated that she was responsible—though indirectly—for the following uses and abuses :—

As her hair was very beautiful and much admired, women asked their *coiffeurs* to help them to have similar hair, and in that way dyes for the hair were introduced.

Then the rapacious hairdresser exhibited wigs, tresses, and plaits *à l'Impératrice*, and false hair became the fashion. Chignons and Eugénie curls sold by the thousand.

The Empress' wonderfully fresh complexion excited admiration, and in order to resemble her, first the ladies of the Court, later women of the middle classes, tried to enhance the beauty of their skin by injurious chemical preparations.

Eugénie, following the Spanish custom, pencilled her eyebrows black, and other women did the same.

As the Empress had wonderfully bright eyes, those women who were not similarly gifted employed belladonna in order to make them brilliant.

Be that as it may, the Empress of the French will always be remembered as a supreme ruler in the realms of fashion.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### LONDON AND PARIS

EUGÉNIE'S ambitious aspirations had a higher purpose than supremacy in fashion. Nor was she satisfied with the possession of a sceptre which women prize above that of royalty and empire—the sceptre of beauty. From the early days of her marriage she aspired to political influence in the government of France, and beyond France if possible.

The detective, to whom reference has already been made, was a shrewd observer. Under the date of April 16, 1853, he wrote: "An effort is being made to persuade the public that the Empress wields no influence over the Emperor, but it is generally held that, on the contrary, her influence is very great, and her advice is frequently taken by him."

At the beginning, however, the Empress could not find the right road to follow, on account of the contrasts in her *Ego*, such as excessive indulgence, then parsimony pushed to the last limits; geniality and coldness; frivolity and severity. The result

of this was that from 1853 to 1855 she dissatisfied many of her entourage.

Her first political success, which encouraged, and perhaps spoiled, her, was during the Crimean war; that war made for the benefit of England, and which brought France nothing but glory.

A letter addressed by the Emperor of the French to the Tsar was a kind of ultimatum; the ruler of all the Russias refused to accept it, and in a manifesto to his people, issued on April 11, he violently accused France and England of disturbing European peace, concluding as follows:

"Governments and nations will have already appreciated the designs which are covered with the cloak of religion."

Eugénie took advantage of the political rapprochement between France and England, and determined to be received by Queen Victoria.

The Count de Vieil-Castel says:

"Queen Victoria had refused her ministers' suggestion that she should send a personal invitation to the Emperor and the Empress of the French. 'If they come to England,' she said, 'I will receive them officially in the best manner possible, but I am mistress in my own home, and will not be forced into receiving as intimates persons for whom I have personally no liking.'"

It is impossible to know whether Eugénie was aware of this attitude on the part of the English Sovereign. Probably she was, but refused to be rebuffed, and used the weight of politics in order to be received by Queen Victoria, whose reputation as a good wife and devoted mother was universal.

She fully realized that if she could gain the favour of the Queen of England, her past life would be the more easily forgotten and her position at other courts improved.

A minister was sent to England, officially to negotiate the conditions of peace between the Powers, but at the same time he had received orders to settle all points of etiquette in connection with the proposed visit.

It was on April 16, 1855, that Napoleon, wearing the uniform of a divisional general, and the Empress a straw bonnet and gray cloak, under which could be seen the rich colours of a tartan dress, landed on the English coast, and continued their journey to London in the company of Prince Albert.

One reads in the *Times* of April 16 the following leading article :

" It is not merely a great potentate like the late Emperor of Russia, or a king like Louis Philippe, who professed to cultivate a personal intimacy with the Queen of England and her family, that the ancient halls of Windsor will this day receive. Louis Napoleon returns to this country elected to supreme power by 8,000,000 Frenchmen, holding in a steady grasp that sceptre which has so often slipped from the hands of the sagacious and the strong, and using the power of France for purposes and objects identical with our own.

" His person, his habits, and the incidents of his life are familiar to all of us. The Empress Eugénie, like himself, has mingled in English society; she received her education in England, and is herself the daughter of an old Scottish house, which connects

her more nearly with the people of Great Britain than if her pedigree was derived from the Hapsburgs or the Bourbons."

But not all the English papers were as laudatory as the *Times*, and Eugénie complained of it to Queen Victoria, only to be told that it could not be helped, for the press was free in England. There were also discordant voices raised in Parliament, and a member of the Opposition, Roebuck by name, objected to Queen Victoria giving the brotherly accolade to the French sovereign.

On the other hand, the populace of London received the French sovereigns warmly. The Earl of Malmesbury wrote in his diary under the date of April 16, 1855 : " On going up St. James's Street, the Emperor was seen to point out to the Empress the house where he formerly lived in King Street. This was at once understood by the crowd, who cheered louder than ever."

The official reception was a splendid one. The Queen invested Napoleon with the Order of the Garter, and after the ceremony there was a banquet at Windsor Castle, during which the famous service of gold plate was used. There was also a gala performance of " Fidelio," and a verse complimentary to Napoleon introduced into the National Anthem read as follows :

Emperor and Empress,
O Lord, be pleased to bless;
Look on this scene!
And may we ever find,
With bonds of peace entwin'd,
England and France combined,
God Save the Queen!

Queen Victoria's greeting was apparently a very warm one, for Lord Malmesbury, who was able to look behind the scenes of official life, wrote : " The Queen had arranged everything herself—made out the list of invitations for both parties at Windsor and the concert at Buckingham Palace."

The Queen and the Empress conversed intimately, and the English sovereign was entirely won over by the grace, amiability and respectful deference displayed by the former star of fashionable watering-places.

It was also then that Eugénie's ambitious designs to become Regent were first disclosed, for she told Queen Victoria that she was very anxious for her consort to take command of the French army in the East, as General Pélissier's activity was not satisfactory. " I do not see," she said, " that there is greater danger for him there than in any other place." Lord Clarendon, however, convinced Napoleon of the necessity of remaining in France.

The day of their arrival in London, the French sovereigns were going to be received by the Queen before dinner. Shortly before their departure for Buckingham Palace, the Empress found that the box containing her toilette for the occasion had not come. She grew angry and cried like a child . . . she wished, at the last moment, to say that she was not well, which would not have been a very plausible excuse. Finally, one of her ladies-in-waiting came to her rescue, offering the Empress her own toilette ; it was a very simple frock, but it saved the situation.

Naturally, the English courtiers, accustomed to the refinement of an old and polished court, noticed the slightest mistake or awkwardness in the new French sovereign, and the story is told that the difference between the two sovereigns, one *parvenue* and the other of old lineage, was shown in a small incident: when the Queen and the Empress arrived at the Royal box at the Opera, the Empress of the French turned and looked to see whether her chair was there, while the Queen sat down without looking, knowing that her chair must be there.

At all events, Eugénie was so charming to everybody that Lord Malmesbury was able to write: "Lord Adolphus told me that the leave-taking this morning, when the Emperor and Empress of the French left, was most touching. Everybody cried, even the *suite*. The Queen's children began, as the Empress had been very kind to them and they were sorry to lose her."

Eugénie's sojourn at the English Court produced a deep impression on her; she learned then that the attraction of a Court should not be mainly founded on outward appearances, on extravagance and glitter; she could see that notwithstanding the apparent rigidity of etiquette, life at Court could be easy and home-like. The consequence of this was that she, who disliked the stiffness of the etiquette insisted upon by her consort, became very severe in her demands for its observance. Unfortunately, she exaggerated, and, as the Count de Vieil-Castel puts it, "mistook correctness and a dignified mien for haughtiness and rigidity."

On May 15, 1855, the Emperor and the Empress

of the French opened the great Paris Exhibition, the first of those international and cosmopolitan fairs. Eugénie anticipated a great social triumph from the Royal and princely visits on this occasion, but she was bitterly disappointed. The daughters of kings looked down on her and showed it.

The visit of the Queen of England, however, acted as balm. Not since the days of Louis XIV. had a foreign queen visited France, and it was four hundred years since an English sovereign had been in Paris. Queen Victoria was received with an enthusiasm which it would be difficult to describe. The interest taken in the English sovereign's arrival was so great that £80 were paid for balconies on the route of the *cortège*.

The day of the arrival of Queen Victoria—August 18, 1855—was the *fête* of St. Helena. Queen Victoria seized this golden opportunity of visiting Napoleon's tomb. It was an opportune moment for exclaiming with Racine: "*Et quel temps fut jamais plus fertile en miracles!*"

Queen Victoria was pleased with her enthusiastic welcome by the Parisians, for she wrote: "Imagine these high houses and broad streets decorated in the most charming manner with banners, flags, triumphal arches, flowers and brightly illuminated inscriptions, crowded with people, and lined with well-ordered, enthusiastic soldiers, among whom the National Guard, the troops of the line, and the Chasseurs d'Afrique presented a varied spectacle. Unceasing were the shouts of *Vive la Reine d'Angleterre! Vive l'Empereur! Vive le Prince Albert!*"

In return for Queen Victoria's hospitality at Windsor, Napoleon gave a ball at Versailles, which surpassed any entertainment given since the days of Louis XIV.

The Empress, who looked brilliantly beautiful at the ball, had, however, been little seen during the public festivities; she alleged indisposition, but it was merely an able manœuvre on her part, for in that manner she became all the more intimate with Queen Victoria in the home circle, where intercourse was made as genial as possible.

Napoleon and Prince Albert sang duets; the Queen sketched in the environs of Saint-Cloud, and often found her way to Eugénie's private apartment, where the two sovereigns sat together and talked confidentially for hours at a time.

Queen Victoria, describing her visit to Napoleon's tomb, wrote: "... I stood at the arm of Napoleon III., his nephew, before the coffin of England's bitterest foe; I, the grand-daughter of that king who hated him the most, and who most vigorously opposed him, and this very nephew, who bears his name, being my nearest and dearest ally! The organ of the church was playing 'God save the Queen' at the time, and this solemn scene took place by torchlight, and during a thunder-storm. Strange and wonderful indeed. It seems as if, in this tribute of respect to a departed and dead foe, old enmities and rivalries were wiped out, and the seal of Heaven placed upon that bond of unity which is now happily established between two great and powerful nations. May Heaven bless and prosper it!"

In token of her friendship, the Empress gave the Queen her fan, and to Princess Victoria a bracelet set with diamonds and rubies round a medallion in which was placed a lock of Eugénie's hair.

The Royal family left Paris on August 27, and, so we are told, there were tears again, this time shed by Princess Victoria, who had become very fond of Eugénie.

## CHAPTER XIX

### ORSINI'S ATTEMPT

EUGÉNIE thought that the Exhibition of 1855 would bring to the Tuileries a host of illustrious visitors. It is true that Victor Emmanuel and the Duke of Brabant were received by the French sovereigns, but only the Queens of England and Spain came officially.

Towards the end of 1857 Napoleon III. went to Stuttgart to meet the Tsar. The Empress of the French had hoped that the Tsarina would also come, and that she would become as friendly with her as with the Queen of England. At her instigation there was a correspondence between the Russian and French chancelleries, but the result was negative. Eugénie therefore went to Spain instead.

Napoleon, accompanied by Generals de Montebello, de Failly, Fleury and Espinasse, his aides-de-camp, and Prince Joachim Murat as orderly officer, went to Stuttgart and met the Tsar. A few days later the Tsarina came also, and Napoleon III. was presented to her.

While the Emperor was at the camp at Boulogne, he received the King of the Belgians, the King of Portugal and Prince Albert, and it was whispered then that they all came at that time because the Empress was away.

On January 14, 1858, Orsini attempted to assassinate the Emperor and his consort while they were on their way to the Opera for the performance of *Mary Stuart* and *William Tell*, in which Ristori was appearing.

Lord Malmesbury writes: "An infamous attempt was made on the 14th to assassinate the Emperor Napoleon. Three grenades were thrown at his carriage as it stopped at the door of the Opera House, and all exploded, shattering the carriage, killing the horses and wounding a great number of persons, but the Emperor and Empress were unhurt."

Orsini had awaited his opportunity for a long time, following the Emperor about on horseback, and nobody suspected that this elegant horseman was at the head of a dastardly plot. At his lodgings at No. 10 rue du Mont-Tabor, Orsini himself dried the gunpowder for his grenades before his fireplace, risking being blown up if a single spark reached it.

On January 14, at eight o'clock in the evening, he went out, followed by his three accomplices, Pieri, Rudio and Gomez, each of them carrying a bomb, while Orsini had two. When the Sovereigns arrived at the Opera, three bombs were thrown under the carriage in which they were seated. One of the horses was killed, the carriage badly damaged, and more than a hundred and fifty

people were wounded. Napoleon's hat was pierced and the Empress' frock was stained with blood.

Eugénie showed remarkable courage, saying to those surrounding her: "Do not bother yourselves about us; it is our trade; take care of the wounded." The two Sovereigns, admirable in their sang-froid, entered the Opera.

Ristori remembered that historical evening for ever, and said afterwards: "I was acting in *Mary Stuart*, and had reached the line 'The arm of the assassin is my only and terrible terror,' when the Emperor gave me a look which I will never forget."

Orsini was not a vulgar murderer. A disciple of Mazzini, he was passionate in his love for Italy, and he thought that Napoleon's death would bring about a revolution in France, the repercussion of which in Italy would set his beloved land free.

We read in Lord Malmesbury's Memoirs: "Twenty-seven persons are arrested, all of them Italian. Orsini, the chief, was himself severely wounded, which prevented his escaping, and led to apprehension. His servant foolishly went about inquiring after his master, and when asked his name, fainted. On his recovery he was threatened with arrest if he did not give his address. He did so, and the gendarme went to his house and found Orsini in his bed, with a severe wound in the head. On seeing them he exclaimed: 'I am lost!' and then attempted to pass himself off as an Englishman, but his accent betrayed him."

The Count de Vieil-Castel has some interesting lines on the Empress' attitude towards Orsini and his accomplices:

" The Empress has truly lost her mind; she cried and begged on her knees for his pardon. She admires Orsini, and she said: ' Orsini did not wish to murder the Emperor of the French, but the friend of the Emperor of Austria.' The Cardinal-Archbishop of Bordeaux said to her: ' My priestly garments and my white hairs prompt me to be clement, but my conscience tells me justice should follow its course.' "

General Espinasse, the Home Secretary, said to her: ' It is not your affair, madam; let us do our duty, and do yours. If you are unfortunate enough to obtain Orsini's pardon, you will not be able to go out in the streets of Paris without being hooted at. . . . You do wonderful things with your clemency; you obtained from the Emperor an order that a certain cabinet-maker, whom I kept under lock and key, should be released. Do you know who that man is? He is the assassin of the Opéra Comique plot."

And then in another place:

" The most inconceivable words pronounced by the Empress were these: ' It was the exaltation of generous sentiments which made Orsini an assassin. He loves freedom passionately, and he hates the oppressors of his country. I remember well how we in Spain hated the French after the wars of the First Empire! ' "

Lord Malmesbury, whose Memoirs are intensely interesting because they are so personal and sincere, says:

" I was much amused at overhearing a conversation between Persigny and Sir George Lewis on the

subject of the attempt on Louis Napoleon. Sir George affirmed that the cause of the attempt was the occupation of Rome by the French. Persigny replied: 'If we were not there, the Austrians would be.'

"The other answered:

"'In that case, the Emperor of Austria would have been assassinated.'

"Persigny, at this, got into a towering passion, and said that the cases were quite different: the Emperor of Austria had two hundred heirs to the Crown, while the Emperor of the French had only one.

"I tried to appease him, for he was in a perfect fury, and accompanied him into one of the outer rooms, where we sat talking for half-an-hour."

Jules Favre, who defended Orsini, ended his defence with the following words: "God will judge this man, and perhaps He will grant him the pardon refused by the judges of this world."

Orsini, before putting his head under the knife of the guillotine, shouted: "Vive l'Italie!" and the crowd, troubled and thoughtful, broke up in silence.

It is a curious fact that Orsini's father acted as Napoleon's godfather on the Emperor's initiation into the Society of the Carbonari.

## CHAPTER XX

### THIRST FOR ABSOLUTE POWER

EUGÉNIE'S influence during the Italian war was deplorable. At the beginning she did everything in her power to prevent Napoleon from helping the Italians. She consoled herself by being appointed Regent, an honour which she desired ardently. Then, she was instrumental in preventing the Emperor from completing the independence of the Latin nation, which was only half realized. The Italians had expected more; dissatisfaction supplanted their gratitude, and France's ambiguous policy deprived her of a powerful ally in the future.

The Count de Vieil-Castel censured Napoleon for his attitude, saying: "He deceived Austria at Villafranca, the Church by the Italian campaign, Russia after the Crimean War, and now he tries to avert the revolution."

The Italian war was caused by that great patriot and crafty diplomatist, Cavour. Napoleon was in favour of Italian independence, not only because of his former association with the Carbonari, but also

because of his ideal of nationality, which was one of the principal characteristics of his policy.

"I cannot be in conflict with Austria just now," said Cavour, "but be at ease, for I have a presentiment that the present peace will not last long."

Cavour was the principal advocate of the marriage of Prince Napoleon with Princess Clotilde, Victor-Emmanuel's daughter, for he firmly believed that this union would be the best guarantee of the alliance between the two nations.

Eugénie did not grasp the situation, and by her lack of tact hurt the feelings of the pious and austere princess of the ancient House of Savoy, even to the extent of provoking the princess into exclaiming: "Madam, you forget that I was born at a Court!"

Cavour spurred on Napoleon, and as public opinion was in favour of the war, the Emperor put himself at the head of the army, and made the Empress Regent. In this connection there was a lively dispute between them, Eugénie bitterly opposing Napoleon's plan to make ex-King Jérôme Governor of Paris and Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard. She declared she would never accept a disarmed Regency, and eventually carried her point. This attitude shows how ardently she desired absolute power.

On May 10, 1859, the Emperor left the Tuileries, with the Empress seated on his left. "Our poor Empress' eyes are as large as eggs," wrote Mérimée, "and she shed more tears while taking leave of the departing regiments."

Lord Malmesbury wrote: "I had a conversation

of above an hour with the Empress on politics, chiefly on the Roman question. Thouvenal had just been dismissed as being too anti-Papal, and as leaning to the abandonment of his Holiness, and Drouyn de l'Huys has replaced him. The Empress did not, as I expected, treat the subject as a *dévote*, though she said that no scandal could be greater than an exiled Pope with no foot of earth belonging independently to himself, and that the honour of France was engaged to protect him from being driven out of Rome; that, if he were, the Austrians would come to his rescue and France have no right to prevent it, as, by the Treaty of Zürich with Austria, the Pope was to be maintained; that the Italians should be satisfied for the time with what they had got, and not attempt impossibilities, but organise what they possessed; that there was no such thing in Italy as an organising mind or a man of business."

The Empress of the French failed to appreciate Cavour's craftiness. The proper course for the Emperor of the French was either to prevent Italy from forming a powerful kingdom, or to help her to the end unreservedly. "You are Mazzini's slave!" she said angrily one day to her consort.

Count Walewski alone was against Napoleon's Italian policy, being perspicacious enough to see that the unification of the kingdom would make of it a force with which France must reckon.

The Emperor returned from Italy in July, and the festivities began. Troplong, for once not too adroit a courtier, compared Napoleon to Scipio, to which the Emperor said: "That devil of a Trop-

long embarrasses me with his comparison." The Empress began to laugh, and an officer rejoined: "It is the greatest praise one could bestow upon a husband, for Scipio was the most continent man of his time."

From all appearances, the Empress' idea of her own importance became very inflated. Taxile Delord says of her: "The Empress, since she ascended the throne, has assumed the rôle of protector of the ultramontane pretensions. Being little prepared by her worldly past to understand religious questions, she has treated them with the awkward zeal of an ignorant woman and a fanatical Spaniard."

Napoleon, pushed on the one hand by the partisans of Italy, and on the other by his wife, dissatisfied everybody, including the Holy Father.

Though she considered herself a master mind in politics, neither Eugénie nor those who surrounded her understood that France should look askance at the increasing power of Prussia.

Already in 1855, it was evident that Bismarck was urging the policy of his country towards the unity of Germany, and planning the war against France.

Towards the end of 1856, Prince Frederick William, returning from London with Moltke, was received magnificently at the Tuileries. It was then that Moltke, trying to see the truth under the false brilliancy of the Second Empire, wrote: "The Empress speaks with animation and much freedom, and her manners are such that one is astonished to find them in so exalted a place." He

also noticed that the French barracks were badly kept, that the French soldiers marched badly, and handled their rifles negligently.

The Countess von Hatzfeldt, daughter of Marshal de Castellane, wrote :

" We have been again invited to dine at the Tuileries. The Prince has left Paris and I believe he must be satisfied with that which he has seen here."

In 1862 Bismarck left the German Embassy in St. Petersburg and came to Paris, where he thought he could serve his country better. He frequented the drawing-room of the Countess Walewska assiduously, and tried hard to make her speak about political matters, thinking that she would commit some indiscretion, but his cunning efforts were in vain ; she was too intelligent to be caught even by the foxy Bismarck. Count Walewski was against the policy of Prussia for the same reasons that he opposed that of Italy.

In June of 1867 a coach stopped in the courtyard of Saint-Cloud to change horses. In that vehicle there were : The Emperor of the French, the Tsar of All the Russias, the King of Prussia, the Empress, Bismarck and a lady of the Palace. The Prussians were getting ready for the campaign of 1870.

Mme. Carette wrote in her Memoirs : " General Blumenthal, while visiting in England, was hunting with Lord Albemarle, who expressed the desire to go to Berlin in order to be present at the manœuvres of the Prussian army. ' Do not take that trouble,' replied the Prussian general. ' Soon we will give

for your benefit a grand review in the Champ de Mars in Paris.' "

The writing was on the wall, but the Empress of the French and her followers saw fit to ridicule the King of Prussia, and to laugh at the Germans.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE MEXICAN TRAGEDY

THE first important proof of Eugénie's disastrous policy of mixing in affairs of State was the Mexican war.

The Duc de Morny inspired it, while the Empress of the French and the Princess von Metternich, both under the influence of ambitious and romantic ideas, were the promoters of that deplorable Mexican affair, in which the chivalrous Maximilian found death and his wife madness, in which many thousands of Frenchmen were killed, 210,000,000 francs lost, and the honour of France tarnished.

It is difficult to pick up again all the lost threads of this drama, the last act of which was played at Queretaro.

Numerous Mexican families, ruined by continual civil wars, left the unfortunate country. These refugees, Spaniards, English and French, united their claims and persuaded their respective Governments to intervene. A conference was held in London, and Mexico promised to pay the claims. Time rolled on, civil war continued, and the

Mexican Government, finally, declared that it was not in a position to keep its promises.

France, England and Spain agreed on a united demonstration to force the Mexicans to fulfil their agreement. Admiral Jurien de la Gravière commanded the French fleet, with unlimited power to act as military chief and minister plenipotentiary, Dubois de Saligny being specially appointed to negotiate a settlement. A Spanish fleet arrived at Vera Cruz, but the English, preoccupied by American complications, hesitated, and then did not second their allies whole-heartedly. Subsequently, England and Spain withdrew, leaving the French to themselves.

The growing complications in Mexico caused Napoleon much anxiety. "Would to God the Emperor had renounced this unfortunate expedition!" exclaimed the beautiful Mlle. Bouvet, afterwards Mme. Carette. But fate willed otherwise, and General Forey was appointed commander-in-chief of the French Army.

At the beginning of the hostilities numerous bulletins announced brilliant victories. Subsequently the news was bad. The French correspondent of the *Indépendance Belge* wrote on February 27, 1866: "The news received from Mexico by the steamer *Vera Cruz* is hardly satisfactory. The *guerillas* have reappeared on the great lines of communication. The Mexican clergy is hostile to the Catholic Emperor Maximilian."

Mme. Carette gives us an example of Eugénie's extreme sensibility. The news reached Saint-Cloud that General de Galiffet, wounded in the

stomach at the battle of Puebla, had dragged himself to an ambulance with his képi over the wound. The surgeon declared he could save the general's life on condition that ice was kept constantly applied to his wound. A second despatch stated that as there was no ice, Galiffet's life was at stake. This news was received at the moment when ices were being served at the Imperial table.

"I could not eat an ice," said the Empress, "when I think that we may lose a brave officer because they are short of ice out there." And as long as Galiffet's life was in danger, Eugénie did not touch them.

Maximilian's power was illusive; his influence existed only as long as he was backed by the French troops. The war dragged on, public opinion in France became restless, and Napoleon at last withdrew the Army, notwithstanding Bazaine's protest.

A contemporary wrote: "Sadness mingled with irony takes hold of one when one thinks of the six collars of the new Order of the Eagle of Mexico, created by the Emperor Maximilian, which were sent to the Emperor of the French, the Emperor of Austria, the Kings of Sweden, Italy and the Belgians."

The Shakespeare of the future will find abundant material in the nineteenth century for inspiration for his tragedies.

Since ancient times, when Œdipus' destiny inspired the master of Greek tragedy, history has no more gloomy and tragic events than those which concern Rudolf, Archduke of Austria; Louis II. of Bavaria, drowned by the blackguard *bravi* of a

great minister; Alexander II. of Russia, blown to pieces by the Nihilists; Maximilian of Mexico, abandoned light-heartedly by a dreamer who succeeded in becoming Emperor, and was punished at Sedan for his treacherous conduct, while his consort, prime instigator of this terrible affair, mourned during long years the loss of her only son. Bazaine was punished still more severely, when, after the fall of Metz, the word traitor was for ever attached to his name.

Maximilian fell into the hands of Juares, that ambitious barbarian whose power had collapsed on the royal martyr's arrival in Mexico, and on the morning of the 19th of June he was shot.

"Shoot boldly!" he cried to the firing-party, "and may my blood be the last to be shed for this unfortunate country!"

These were his last words. He died nobly—like a Prince, a Christian and a soldier.

When the news of this terrible crime reached Paris it caused deep emotion among the people, and with that clairvoyance which the masses sometimes show, they threw the whole responsibility for it on the Empress.

Napoleon, summoning to his cabinet Hyrvoix, the chief of the secret police, asked him what the country thought, and what the people said. "Sire, they say nothing."

"You are hiding something from me; I wish to know what the people say."

"Sire . . . Sire . . . under Louis XVI. they said: 'It is the fault of the Austrian woman.'"

" Yes, well, and to-day? "

" To-day . . . they say . . . it is the fault of the Spanish woman."

Suddenly a door opened violently, and the Empress rushed in. The Emperor was already spied upon constantly, and could conceal nothing.

" Repeat. Repeat to me what you said! " she exclaimed to the detective.

After a moment's hesitation, Hyrvoix said:

" The Emperor wished to know what the public opinion was, and I considered it my duty to tell him. The Parisians speak of ' the Spanish woman,' as formerly they spoke of ' the Austrian woman.' "

" Spanish woman. . . . Spanish woman! " almost screamed Eugénie. " I became a French woman, but I can show my foes that I can again be a Spaniard! "

She disappeared as quickly as she had entered. The detective bent his head; Napoleon took him by the hand and said: " You have done your duty! " This, however, did not prevent him from being dismissed from his post. The Empress prevailed upon her consort, as she did always, and avenged herself in true Spanish fashion.

" The French expedition to Mexico and its tragical end are a sad blot on Louis Napoleon," wrote Lord Malmesbury.

Yes, the checkmating of France was the checkmating of Austria, and the checkmating of Austria was followed by her defeat at Sadowa . . . Sadowa prepared the way for Sedan. . . .

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE EMPRESS REGENT

ROCHEFORT had written in the *Lanterne:* "The Empress has already taken hold of the Regency while the poor Emperor is still alive."

This was literally true, for Napoleon was both physically and morally used up. Physically he was suffering from gravel, morally because of constant quarrels with his consort.

Continual scenes with the Empress, her bitter reproaches, her fits of anger lasting several days, rancours which persisted for several months, blunted Napoleon's strength of character.

Eugénie's influence became more and more preponderant. Napoleon, feeble and sick, was to be a plaything in her hands; she knew his weak points: he was afraid of scenes and preferred to give in.

In 1865, Napoleon, being already attacked by the malady which was to annihilate his physical and moral forces, make him the prey of the Empress' faction, and ultimately bring him to the grave, decided to go to Algeria, where he expected

COUNTESS WALEWSKA

to find not only alleviation for his suffering, but also a little of that peace of mind which he needed so much.

Before leaving, he entrusted Eugénie with the government of France, and made her Regent. Henceforth, she, seconded by the "Vice-Emperor," Rouher, was to produce and direct the events which destroyed the Empire and nearly annihilated France.

She was initiated into all State affairs, all projects were submitted to her, and her political influence became very great indeed.

The Count de Vieil-Castel wrote in 1861: "The Empress plays towards the Emperor the same rôle that Mme. du Barry played towards Louis XV.; she makes friends with the women favoured by Napoleon, she fosters their commerce with her consort, she pushes them into his arms in order to obtain through them more influence. The Countess Walewska, *sultane valide*, is constantly with her; the Countess de la Bédoyère is well received, as well as the daughter of the painter Pomeyrac, who had twenty thousand francs from the Emperor the other day."

Then again: "The Countess Walewska, wife of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is the Emperor's favourite at present. The Empress cannot live without her, and Walewski revels in his newly-found power."

Some time later: "Mme. Walewska is no longer in favour with the Empress, who is marvellously cold towards her, but *en revanche* Her Majesty patronises an American to whom the Emperor has

paid great attention, but who comes from nobody knows where. She is invited to the small gatherings, and the *caillettes* think her charming. The Empress does not fancy French Society, although she was not so particular in her choice before her ascent to the throne."

The Empress gave proofs of energy while ruling the country. "We now have an Empress' government," wrote Rochefort, "and I beg you to believe that it is neither less despotic, nor less ferocious." The first difficulty she encountered during her regency was the cabmen's strike. She summoned to the Tuileries the War Minister, who came to an understanding with the cab companies, and the Parisians were delighted next day to see the cabs out again, driven by the gunners.

One day she brusquely asked a member of the Opposition: "What is the reform now most desired by the people?"

"Madam, it is the freedom of the press," was the precise answer.

She made a gesture of irritation, and rejoined:

"If one allowed the papers to say everything they liked, the government would be insulted and calumniated. Every day they reproach the Emperor with the Coup d'Etat of December 2, and the press must be controlled until December 2 has been forgotten."

Wishing to introduce certain reforms, she appointed a Commission, in which the Opposition leader, Emile Ollivier, was included. During one meeting at the Tuileries a violent gust of wind forced open a window. The Empress went to shut

it, and Ollivier came to her help, saying : " Let us hope, madam, that our united efforts will be able to cope with the human torrent as successfully as they have coped with the elements." Ollivier already foresaw the catastrophe.

While the Empress held the reins of government, Napoleon wrote to her that he was getting well in Algeria. As a matter of fact, the malady which ultimately caused the death of both Emperor and Empire was making dire progress. In the place of his authority there rose another. His friends warned Napoleon against that overwhelming influence of an authoritative and insufficiently enlightened woman. The faithful Persigny made a great effort to open the Emperor's eyes, but he was already too feeble to make an effort of will.

From that division of power there resulted fatal chaos. Nobody knew what to do, or which party to follow. A contemporary politician said : " The Emperor is groping in darkness. He does not back up Poland in order not to hurt Russia. He has allowed himself to be cheated by Bismarck, who had ceded the right bank of the Rhine to him in exchange for the promise that he would not uphold Austria. He gave up Mexico because he was afraid of the United States. He withdrew his soldiers from Rome because he was frightened of Mazzini and of the revolution. He has invented that elastic formula : watchful neutrality."

Napoleon committed an irreparable mistake in permitting Austria to be crushed by Prussia. An army corps sent towards the Rhine would have been sufficient to prevent Sadowa, which prepared

the unity of Germany. The satisfaction of getting Venetia and giving it to Italy was illusory and vain, for Italy felt humiliated at receiving it in that manner.

The Queen of Holland showed great political wisdom when she wrote: "With Venetia once ceded, the only thing to do was to help Austria, to march towards the Rhine and impose conditions. To allow Austria to be crushed was more than a crime; it was a mistake."

The Emperor, accompanied by his consort, visited the Emperor of Austria in August. While travelling through Germany they were well received by the German kings and princes.

The interview between Francis-Joseph and Napoleon was very hearty. The Count von Beust, who worked hard after Sadowa to restore the prestige of Austria, wished this exchange of politenesses to lead to a serious alliance between Austria and France, an alliance which would have stopped the dangerous unification of Germany.

Hearing of the Count von Beust's plans, Eugénie said in that peremptory tone which she had assumed since taking an active part in the government: "Monsieur de Beust is in too great a hurry to close the deal." The Count von Beust was hurt, became cool, and the interview brought no result.

The Duc de Morny's death was a blow to the Empire. He was a son of Hortense and de Flahaut. An obscure Auvergnat called Demorny gave him his name when his birth was registered. Morny succeeded entirely through his own efforts,

for he was intelligent and daring. He speculated and made a big fortune.

When he learned that he was so nearly related to Louis Napoleon, he was already somebody. He supported his brother's policy and helped him greatly with his enterprising and inventive mind. He was the best man Napoleon had among his followers. It was he who, speaking of the Orléanists, said those very true words: "They dare not seize their swords, nor put their hands into their pockets; we will do without them."

Morny was a genius for business. Being unscrupulous, he entered into financial combinations which were not always above suspicion. He conducted both his private and political affairs boldly, and left twelve millions to his children.

He was *intransigeant* in politics, in which he saw further than the Emperor, for he said: "The day Germany believes that there is a serious accord between France and Russia, she will pass through the eye of a needle." It was a pity that the Emperor did not think seriously over those words. Notwithstanding his faults, Morny was the only man who had a clear perception of the situation.

The next man of importance in regard to political wisdom was Niel, but his shouts of alarm remained *vox clamantis in deserto;* he was not listened to.

April 1, 1867, witnessed the opening of a second exhibition in Paris, when crowds again assembled from every corner of the globe, and Paris, to quote a contemporary, became *l'auberge du monde.* Apparently the Empire had lost none of its brilliancy!

One *fête* followed closely on another, and royal visitors arrived in rapid succession. Among the guests of the Tuileries were twelve Emperors and Kings, six ruling princes, one viceroy, and nine heirs-apparent.

There was a grand and imposing spectacle at Longchamps, when the garrison of Paris was passed in review. Eügénie sat at the saluting point, and the monarchs rode up to pay their respects. Alexander of Russia and William of Prussia kissed her hand.

" The grand-daughter of the tradesman Kirkpatrick, the daughter of the frivolous Manuela de Montijo, received before the eyes of the French people the most respectful homage of the mightiest princes of Europe. She was proud, and with good cause ! "

When the prizes of the Exhibition were to be distributed by the Prince Imperial as President, there were among the distinguished guests : The Prince of Wales, the Crown Prince of Prussia, the Crown Prince of Italy, the Duke of Aosta, the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, the Sultan Abdul Aziz, his son and his nephews.

The Emperor of the French, being already seriously ill, was not able to take advantage of the presence of so many sovereigns in his capital, to discuss questions which might have helped him to look in a proper light on the forthcoming events.

The Empress, we are told, introduced international questions into her conversation in such a muddled and superficial manner that she still further entangled the skein.

Bismarck's mind was made up when he left Paris. William still hesitated, while Alexander left dissatisfied. An alliance with Russia would have changed the whole aspect of political affairs in 1870. Morny was right!

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

WHEN the glare and glamour of the Exhibition had passed, the popularity of the Empress was also on the wane. The revolution on the other side of the Pyrenees which had forced Isabella from her throne found a responsive echo in France, where threatening clouds were beginning to darken the horizon.

Mérimée wrote: "Everyone is afraid, without knowing why; there is universal uneasiness. It is a sensation similar to that caused by Mozart's music, when the Commander is about to appear. However, Bismarck, who is the Commander, will not appear, and the talk of a war is not serious.

"If you read over Parliamentary speeches, you will find that there is much eloquence, still more passion and very little in the way of political ideas; on the other hand, there is a villainous revolutionary breeze to be felt, and it makes one very thoughtful."

The royalist party became active. The Marquise de la Rochelambert, replying to someone who ex-

pressed surprise that a Royalist should call on the Emperor, said: "He was right to go to the Tuileries. After all, the Bonapartes are only camping there, and we have a right to visit our property."

The Empress was tired of the strife, of the uproar created by the general election campaigns, of the vituperative articles published by Rochefort, and even of the new amusements invented by her bosom friend the ugly Princess von Metternich. She took advantage of the opportunity offered to her by her cousin, Ferdinand de Lesseps, who asked her to open the Suez Canal, which he had succeeded in building through her influence.

Rochefort wrote: "The Empress' voyage to the Holy Land will cost five million francs. In this way our ladies of the Parisian world imitate Jesus Christ, Who was born in a manger. . . . They say that at the opening of the Suez Canal the Empress will make M. de Lesseps a Duke. It will be difficult to find a name for his Dukedom. One could not make M. de Lesseps Duke of Suez, for Suez belongs to the Sultan, who could expel him from his dominion any day he took a fancy to do so."

Eugénie left France with a brilliant suite. The Khedive received her with great splendour. It was a moment of rest after the bustle of her life, like a voyage in dreamland, in an enchanted country, under resplendent skies, resounding with music, bathed in continual light, full of *fêtes*, of all the charms of an Oriental country doing its best to captivate a mighty and beautiful sovereign.

The Khedive gave a dinner of extraordinary splendour in her honour and uttered such words to his Imperial guest that Eugénie wrote to Napoleon : " Your hair would stand on end if you could hear what the Khedive says to me." Unable to do anything else, he insisted upon kissing the Empress' hands, and a multitude of arguments had to be used to make him understand that etiquette forbade even that to be done too often.

On her return to Paris, after this excursion to the fabled East, Eugénie introduced the burnous, and the modish colour the following winter was *eau de Nil*—an artistic blending of green and grey, with a wonderful silver sheen, recalling the ripples of the Nile in moonlight.

Eugénie found Paris feverish, agitated and fearful : revolution was in the air. It was then that the Empress' party was organized, with the vice-Emperor Rouher at its head, to fight the Liberals, headed by Emile Ollivier. Rouher was only a tool in the Empress' hands, but he was very ambitious. " Rouher clings to power ; he must be removed," said M. de la Valette.

Colonel de Verly describes the gatherings of the Empress' partisans in the following manner :

" Dinner never lasted longer than thirty-five minutes. Coffee was served in the Diana drawing-room, and the guests then went to the White drawing-room, where they stood about for an hour and a half. Their Majesties went round the drawing-room, each in a different direction, stopped before every guest and said a few amiable words. When the Empress came to M. Rouher, she would

look round, then make a sign to the ladies to be seated, while she talked with the man who was justly called the vice-Emperor. Their talks were long and animated. When the Sovereign left M. Rouher, the ladies would rise, and she would continue her promenade."

The pressure of public opinion became so great that Napoleon found himself compelled to relax the reins of his government, but when he modified the laws governing the press the waves of revolution rose higher.

Rochefort poured forth torrents of gall and venom against the Emperor, whom he attacked in coarse terms both as a man and as a ruler, and sullied Eugénie's name with the basest of insinuations: Here is an example of the democratic Marquis's language:

"September 20, 1868.

"Napoleon III. is the Offenbach of emperors, not as a band conductor, but as *jettatore*. It suffices for him to call on a sick man for that man to die. Morny, that nameless fellow whose conduct had no name either, died after the Imperial visit. Mocquart, author of the *Massacres de Syrie* and an accomplice in other massacres, died as soon as he had seen the conqueror of December the Second. The Spanish Government being sick, Queen Isabella made an appointment with her powerful neighbour, and her throne was overthrown even before she had time to press to her bosom that providential man."

" February 8, 1869.

" The papers say that the Emperor and Empress left the last ball at the Tuileries at ten o'clock, before the dancing began. It is evident that there will soon be a dance before which they will be wise if they both withdraw."

Rochefort, banished from France, published the *Lanterne* in Brussels, but was able to distribute it in Paris. Even the Court played with the fire, and read the scurrilous paper. " Why do you read this? " said Mérimée to Princess Julie. " It is too stupid." But even the Empress read the paper—and *fêtes* followed one after the other.

The disastrous year of 1870 began with balls, *fêtes* and merry-making. On January 26, the first ball of the season was given at the Tuileries, and was crowded; nobody seemed to feel the coming of a terrible war with a fearful foe. Confidence made everybody blind.

" The General sees the Prussians everywhere," Napoleon would say of Niel, who saw the danger and submitted a plan for the reorganisation of the army, a plan which was never carried out.

When the Countess de Pourtalès, who, living in Lorraine, had not only the opportunity of seeing the preparations of the Prussians, but also secured important information concerning their designs on France, warned the Government, they smiled at her fears, and shrugging their shoulders, said: " Women's apprehensions! "

Napoleon's true friends advised him to

strengthen the base of his dynasty by giving the country liberal institutions. This was fiercely opposed by the Empress' party, who were of the opinion that the maintenance of the Empire depended on victories—and, that being so, they demanded war with Prussia.

Napoleon began by following the first advice and the great plébiscite was taken. On May 21, the result was proclaimed in the Throne Room of the Louvre. The Emperor and Empress, surrounded by their glittering Court, heard that some 8,000,000 votes had decided that France was no longer to be an autocratic, but a constitutional Empire.

The Opposition nevertheless grew still stronger, and the Empress, haunted by gloomy presentiment, would often say : " I never leave this palace without asking myself whether I shall return to it."

The pressure of the Empress' party was so strong, and the Emperor's will was so weakened, that notwithstanding his motto : *L'Empire, c'est la paix*, despite his fervent wish to induce the Great Powers to disarm, he accepted the possibility of war with Prussia and passed the Law of Regency. This, naturally, gave the government to Eugénie in the event of the Emperor's being obliged to leave, not France, but Paris.

" This Law of Regency is ridiculous," said Prince Jérôme. " Ollivier has been beaten by Rouher, and the Auvergnat has this time had the best of the Marseillais. Rouher is a tricky old lawyer, and more than a match for Ollivier."

Only after the declaration of war was it clear why the Empress' party had urged Napoleon to institute this Law of Regency. They counted on victory, which would make them strong enough to make the Empire autocratic once again and drive out the Liberals. "After the campaign," said Eugénie, "we shall see if they will be bold enough to give us their advice and oppose our designs."

On July 2, 1870, the Queen of Spain abdicated in favour of her son, but General Prim offered the Spanish throne to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern. To have a German Prince on the throne of Spain would have been a heavy blow to the French secular policy, so well expressed in the words of Louis the Fourteenth: *Point de Pyrénées!* The pressure of the French Government was so strong that William of Prussia, who still had not decided on a war against France, induced the *cadet* of his house to withdraw his candidature to the Spanish throne.

"It is a great pity!" exclaimed General Bourbaki, when he heard of this political victory, "for I would like nothing better than to conduct the Emperor to Berlin at the head of my guards."

Eugénie, who wished to rule over France during her consort's absence from the capital, was highly dissatisfied, and there seems little doubt that it was at her instigation that that absurd demand for guarantees was made to Prussia by France.

The French Ambassador at Berlin wrote to M.

Darimon: "Try to find from Ollivier what was the cause of the demand for guarantees, after the Prince von Hohenzollern's renunciation, and of thus changing the whole basis of the negotiations. This new pretension rendered everything impossible." Emile Ollivier answered: "The demand was made without my knowledge."

The story about the falsification of the famous telegram is well known, but it is now proved that the French Government already knew, through its Ambassador at Berlin, that the despatch was altered by Bismarck, and that consequently France was not insulted in the person of her representative.

Had the French people been advised of this, the war might have been avoided, but the Empress' plans were different. Here is what General du Barrail says on the subject:

"I am obliged to recognise that the Empress was, if not the only author, at least the principal author, of the war of 1870. She understood what a mistake she had made in 1866, when she prevented the Emperor from accepting the propositions made by Bismarck at Biarritz, and wished to retrieve that fault. Therefore she urged the war, and her influence was considerable. Her influence over the Emperor was practically unlimited."

Lord Granville, seeing that war between France and Germany was unavoidable, proposed mediation by England, but the Tuileries Cabinet, continuing its ruinous policy of hesitation and tergiversation, gave only an ambiguous reply to the suggestion, and the doom of the Second Empire was sealed.

Lord Malmesbury wrote :

" The Duke de Gramont was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, and on May 19 the Emperor gave a dinner, said to be in honour of the Duke's installation.

" The Duke de Gramont was an agreeable and polished man in society, but vain and impetuous, and had more liberty of action than was given by the Emperor during his former *régime* to his Foreign Ministers.

" The Duke himself gave me the following account of the last scene on July 14, before the declaration of war.

" The Hohenzollern candidature to the throne of Spain had been abandoned, and the Emperor was decidedly disposed to accept this renouncement and to patch up the quarrel, and turn this result into a diplomatic success ; but his Ministers had avoided no opportunity of publishing the insult to all France, and the Press stirred the anger and vanity of the public to a pitch of madness. None had yet taken advantage of this characteristic temper of the Emperor. Before the final resolve to declare war, the Emperor, Empress and Ministers went to Saint-Cloud. After some discussion, Gramont told me that the Empress, a high-spirited and impressionable woman, made a strong and most excited address, declaring that war was inevitable if the honour of France was to be sustained.

" She was immediately followed by Marshal Le Bœuf, who, in the most violent tone, threw down his portfolio and swore that if war was not

declared he would give it up and renounce his military rank.

"The Emperor gave way and Gramont went straight to the Chamber to announce the fatal news."

In reply to the Emperor's inquiry as to whether all was ready, the Minister of War, the same Le Bœuf, replied that everything was *archiprêt*, even to the last gaiter button!

It must be said that the majority of the French were for war and rushed to arms against Prussia with enthusiasm, shouting: *A Berlin! A Berlin!* and singing the Girondist song: "*Mourir pour la patrie.*" Republicans, Imperialists and even Royalists, all sang the prohibited *Marseillaise*.

The Empress' ambition was satisfied: the Emperor left Saint-Cloud for Metz, and she ruled over *la belle France*, which, entirely isolated and unprepared, was about to be easily crushed and humiliated by Bismarck and Moltke.

Soon the ambitious woman found that it was not so easy a task to be a ruler. She had no able followers to help her. She stood alone and at the mercy of an excited populace, ready to rise against her at the smallest provocation.

During her prosperous days, extravagance, bigotry and vanity, had made her feeble and incapable of understanding the true significance of her oft-repeated saying: "I would never leave the Tuileries in a cab, as did Charles X and Louis Philippe. Never would I flee before the Revolution."

It was soon proved that Prince Napoleon was right when he said rather rudely : " And they wish me to rule with the aid of such a goose ! "

## CHAPTER XXIV

### SEDAN

"THE Empress," wrote the Count de Vieil-Castel, "understands neither France nor her proper rôle therein. She forms all sorts of small coalitions and constantly compromises the Imperial cause. Nor does she miss an opportunity of slandering France. . . .

"A month ago, the Emperor was lunching with the Empress, Princess Mathilde and Doctor Conneau. The conversation sustained by the Empress was exclusively about external politics. The Empress spoke with such bitterness and *un parti pris* so decidedly hostile to the politics of France, that the Emperor rose and said impatiently:

"Truly, Eugénie, you forget two things: that you are a Frenchwoman and that you have married a Bonaparte."

Then in another place: "It is difficult to analyse this woman, and I am still less certain what her purpose is; her affection for the Emperor is nothing else but ambition. . . ."

This seemingly cruel assertion appears less unjust after reading the following facts:

"In August, 1869," says M. Darimon, "the Emperor's malady assumed an alarming aspect, and he was obliged to take to his bed." Great physicians watched over him and, as they wished to keep the public in ignorance as to the real state of his health, the *Journal Officiel* said: "His Majesty's rheumatic pains are beginning to disappear." In the *Indépendance Belge* the following despatch from Paris was published: "There is an improvement in the Emperor's health. The results of the tests are favourable."

M. Darimon again:

"In 1870, I had asked the Emperor for an audience . . . it was granted to me only after three weeks. It was said that the Emperor had influenza. I was ushered into the grand drawing-room at the Tuileries. When I saw the Emperor coming towards me I was struck by the change in his features, and by the difficulty with which he moved; he had great difficulty in keeping straight, and he bit his moustache often, as does a man who suffers continually.

"'The Emperor is ill,' I said to Conti, whom I saw after the audience. Conti lifted his eyes to the ceiling, and said nothing."

M. Darimon adds:

"The principal cause of the defeat was the secrecy surrounding the Emperor's malady, which, according to all the physicians, was very grave. On July 1, 1870, Napoleon was suffering so much that a great consultation took place at the Tuileries.

The consulting physicians were Nélaton, Ricord, Fauvel, Sée and Corvisart.

" Dr. Sée was entrusted with the writing of the report, and he did this so clearly that there was not the slightest doubt that an operation was absolutely necessary. Dr. Sée signed his report, and handed it to the Emperor's physician, Dr. Conneau, telling him to ask the other consulting physicians to do likewise.

" Dr. Conneau did not do his duty. When, after the Emperor's death, this forgotten report was found amongst his papers, it was signed only by Dr. Sée. Dr. Conneau and those who kept this consultation secret are responsible for the consequences. Had the operation been performed, the Emperor, cured, would have been strong enough to resist the partisans of the war; and had he been obliged, notwithstanding all, to declare that war, he would have been physically and morally sound, and able to conduct our affairs both in Paris and at the frontier in an entirely different manner.

" When in 1873 Prince Napoleon found Dr. Sée's report at Campden Place, he was astounded, and taking aside Dr. Conneau, said to him :

" ' Why did you keep such an important document secret? '

" ' You are so violent that it is impossible to tell you anything.'

" ' You must speak; the question is of consequence.'

" ' I showed that paper at the proper time to one who had the right to see it.'

" ' And what happened? '

" ' I was told: the wine has been poured out, and it must be drunk.'

" The person who ' had the right ' could be no other than the Empress, and yet war was declared three days after that consultation.

" Dr. Conneau must have told the truth; he would not have dared to throw such a suspicion on the Empress groundlessly, knowing that Prince Napoleon was capable of asking her for an immediate explanation."

Baron Verly accuses the Empress directly:

" How guilty are those, the Empress above all others, who allowed Napoleon to undertake the war of 1870, sick as he was, and did not order an operation to be performed before the downfall of the throne."

The Emperor himself said later:

" I would never have allowed myself to be induced to make war if I had known that the most eminent surgeons of Paris agreed with Professor Sée, who stated formally that I had gravel, and that an operation was urgent."

Emile Ollivier said: " I swear that I and my colleagues were ignorant of the Emperor's malady. Had we been aware of that, we would not have allowed him to take command of the army, and would have kept him in Paris."

The Count de la Chapelle, who enjoyed the Emperor's confidence, speaks in the following terms:

" The côterie of the Tuileries, daily more powerful, had decided in favour of war, and the Empress

had lent it all her support. The momentous Cabinet Council held at Saint-Cloud lasted until four o'clock in the morning. The Emperor was grossly misled by false despatches which forced an immediate decision and obliged Napoleon III. to give his consent after a strong resistance, both on his part and on that of several eminent members of his Cabinet.

" A few hours later, the Duc de Gramont had declared war against Prussia in the Legislative Assembly. The gauntlet was thrown down. The evil was done. The Palace conspirators had accomplished their work: the dying Emperor was removed, and the Empress became Regent!

" Napoleon III., audacious and courageous as he had always been throughout his startling career, did not hesitate to put himself at the head of his army, though his malady made rapid progress . . . but his physical sufferings afflicted him less than his moral ones."

The Marquise de la Ferronnays, although not sympathetically disposed towards Napoleon, who had treated her cavalierly said: " The condition of the Emperor, whom death already held in its grasp, should serve as an excuse for him before the Court of history. One cannot help pitying him when one thinks what he suffered morally and physically during the Terrible Year. His state of health, known to the Empress, was indeed the cause of her determination to have war declared. She was sure that the war would be a series of victories, and thought that under the protection of a victorious army, in

the event of the Emperor's death, she would become Regent for her son."

Paris resounded with shouts of *A Berlin! A Berlin!* After some waiting, which seemed interminable to a populace thirsting for victories, the first telegram was at last received. The insignificant encounter at Saarbruck was magnified into a glorious victory, and Napoleon sent Eugénie the following despatch:

"Louis has received his baptism of fire. He was admirably calm, and never lost his self-possession. One of General Frossar's divisions has taken the heights that command the east of Saarbrück. The Prussians made a short resistance. We were in the foremost rank, and bullets fell at our feet. Louis has kept one ball that fell close by him. Some of the soldiers wept when they saw him so composed. We lost only one officer and ten men.

NAPOLEON."

The message was received with pleasure, but with no enthusiasm. Then came the thunderbolt of the defeats at Woerth and Forbach: "The army is defeated; you must raise your courage to the heights of circumstances. Napoleon."

In the midst of a general panic, the Count de Cossé-Brissac, the Empress' chamberlain, brought in the following short despatch: "Everything may be yet saved." Eugénie fell on her knees, her face bathed with tears, and exclaimed: "Thank God that there is some hope!"

On August 7th she gave orders for the Court to

return at once to Paris, for it was in Saint-Cloud that she received this news. On the following day the walls of Paris were plastered with the following appeal to the people.

" Frenchmen! The beginning of the war has not been favourable to us, and our arms have suffered defeat, but let us be firm in resistance and hasten to retrieve our losses. Let there be but one party among us: that of France; let us follow but one banner: that of our honour! I shall be in your midst, and you will see me faithful to my duty and calling, the first where dangers threatens, the foremost to guard the banner of the Empire. I call upon all good citizens to preserve order, the breach of which will be equivalent to conspiring with our enemies.

EUGÉNIE."

While the Empress was struggling with her destiny, the Emperor suffered terribly during the beginning of that disastrous campaign. In the army nobody knew his state of health. During the fighting at Saarbrück, Napoleon remained impassive, but at moments his face expressed such agony that General Lebrun could not help noticing it, and said: " Your Majesty seems to suffer." " Yes, my dear general, I suffer very much indeed! "

One of the Cabinet Ministers, who was in favour of the Emperor's return to Paris, sent a confidential man to find out what the spirit of the army was, and what the soldiers thought of Napoleon.

The result of these inquiries was very depress-

ing: the army, although still fond of its commander, had begun to doubt his capacity. The Emperor became daily more and more ill; he could only ride for a few moments, and even the movement of the carriage caused him dreadful pain.

On August 9, the Cabinet meeting was held at which Emile Ollivier insisted that the Emperor should return to Paris. The Empress opposed this suggestion vehemently, and mercilessly, and this makes one think of the Count de Vieil-Castel's lines: "The Empress would like to get rid of the Emperor, even as Marie de Medici wished to get rid of Henri IV."

Then the Prince Imperial prevailed upon his father to leave the army, but the Emperor of the French did not dare to do this without his consort's consent. He telegraphed to her, but the Regent forbade him to come back. He was forced to go to Sedan!

The Germans advanced every day like the waves of a terrible inundation. The army of Châlons could have fallen back on Paris, but Palikao objected: "The Empress desires the expedition; it is a point of honour with her; it would be odious to leave Bazaine without help." But Bazaine had a strong army and could have defended himself quite well.

Napoleon said subsequently to Sir John Burgoyne: "On our return to Châlons, I wished to conduct our last army to Paris, but here also political considerations forced me to accomplish that most imprudent and unstrategical movement which finished at Sedan."

On August 13, the new War Minister, General Palikao, announced in the Legislative Corps that the Emperor was deprived of the direction of the war, Bazaine being appointed to take the supreme command.

By overthrowing the Cabinet and by abandoning the vanquished Emperor, the Empress thought that she was strengthening the Regency; she soon perceived that she had annulled her own power. That power passed from her to the deputies, and defeat followed defeat.

The Empress, maddened, and not knowing what to do, wrote a vain, imploring letter to the Tsar, beseeching him to intervene in favour of France. She turned to Metternich, but that diplomatist had forgotten his old sentiment for the Empress, and looked impassively on her misfortunes. Chaos ruled. There was no longer any supreme command in the army. Everybody gave orders: the Emperor, the Empress, the War Ministry! . . .

And then came the last blow. As the Minister of the Interior, Henri Chevreau, was on his way to the Tuileries in the afternoon of September 3, he was stopped by the head of the Telegraphic Service, who told him that he had received a message of the utmost importance from the Emperor to the Empress, adding:

"I usually attend to the telegrams that are exchanged between their Majesties myself; but I have not the heart to deliver this one."

It was the ominous news: "The army is defeated and taken. I am a prisoner. Napoleon."

The French army, surrounded on all sides by an

iron ring of three hundred German guns, ready to vomit out the fire of annihilation, had been obliged to surrender, and we read among Napoleon's despatches the following explanatory defence: "Not being able to die in the midst of my soldiers, I was obliged to constitute myself a prisoner, in order to save the army."

On September 4, Jules Favre read to the Legislative Corps the *ordre du jour* which proclaimed the overthrow of the Empire.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE FLIGHT TO ENGLAND

IN the meantime, revolution had been simmering in Paris, the *Marseillaise* was heard at every corner, red flags were hoisted on every important building. Dense crowds surged up and down the boulevards, which resounded with hoarse cries of " Down with the Emperor! Down with the Empress! Long live the Republic! "

The correspondent of the *Daily News* wrote :

" From the windows of the huge barracks, formerly filled with troops who appeared ready to die for their Emperor, I noticed soldiers laughing, waving their handkerchiefs and shouting : *Vive la République!*

" Then upon the quay I saw busts of the Emperor pitched out of the houses and thrown into the Seine amid tremendous shouts of applause. Everybody was laughing or weeping with joy, shaking hands and embracing his neighbour."

The Marquis de Castelbajac, Equerry to the Empress, suggested on September 3 that she should leave the Tuileries in a cab. She refused to do so.

The Empress asked her faithful Mérimée to interview Thiers, the future President of the Republic. Mérimée said to Thiers:

"You know why I have come?"

"Yes, I can guess."

"You can do us a great favour."

"I can do nothing for you."

"You have a good chance to form a representative government."

"Nothing can be done after Sedan."

When the members of the Chamber met at noon, the partisans of the Empire decided to send a deputation to the Empress in order to come to some understanding with her. Count Daru and M. Buffet were received in the deserted and gloomy Tuileries, the Regent being accompanied by Admiral Jurien de la Gravière.

M. Buffet urged that the increasing strength of the Opposition made it urgent to treat with them in order to retain even a vestige of power. The Empress declared proudly that she would never consent to yield the authority vested in her. During the interview, bulletins brought worse and worse news, but she would not give way.

An usher announced that M. Gardanes, deputy for the Gironde, had come from the Legislative Corps with a very important communication. "Let him wait," answered the Regent angrily. Count Daru insisted that the deputy should be received. "There is nothing urgent," answered Eugénie. She did not grasp the situation, did not realise how important the events were. When

finally M. Gardanes was introduced and told her that the Chamber had been invaded by the mob, shouting: *Vive la République!* she realised that there remained for her nothing but flight.

Admiral Jurien de la Gravière proposed that the Versailles road should be taken. " I am too well known there," answered the Empress. " Let us then go to Hâvre, which we can reach in a little boat by the Seine." Still she demurred: " At the first lock they would pluck me like a violet."

The Prince von Metternich and Signor Nigra were announced. " We have come to offer the Empress our protection," said Nigra.

" The Prince von Metternich," wrote Mme. Carette, " drew Mme. Lebreton towards a window and spoke with her in an undertone. Then Mme. Lebreton came to the Empress and spoke with her. The Empress nodded in agreement. Then Admiral Jurien de la Gravière asked the Austrian Ambassador some questions. ' Be at your ease,' answered Prince von Metternich. ' I will answer for everything, and you can accompany Her Majesty.' "

The mob outside the Tuileries was surging backwards and forwards, trampling itself underfoot, animated by one thought, hatred of the Empress, which had spread like wildfire among the masses. The mob rolled on like a living avalanche, till it reached the gates of the Tuileries, which it forced.

Then wild shouts became audible on the grand staircase. The Empress was cajoled into leaving the Palace, and took leave of her ladies-in-waiting.

Mme. de Bourgoing entered, and said: "My husband commands 3,500 faithful soldiers; I come to take Your Majesty's orders." "Orders?" answered the Empress. "I have none to give."

General Mellinet entered the drawing-room. "I come to ask the Empress' permission to silence those fellows," he said. The Marquis de Castelbajac told him then that the Empress was leaving the Tuileries.

The shouts of the mob became louder and louder, and General Mellinet said to the leaders of the mob, who came to ask him to withdraw the troops from the Tuileries: "I will do so; but I warn you that if one of my men is even bothered, I will remember that I command them."

Eugénie had not the strength to withstand the first blow of the revolution, and could not keep the proud promises which she had uttered so often. She fled in a cab, as Charles X. and Louis Philippe had done.

The Empress' flight, so well described by Mme. Carette, is too well known to be repeated here; everybody knows how the American dentist, Dr. Evans, became an historical personage by helping the Empress of the French to reach England.

Eugénie's brilliant Court vanished like a flight of birds on the apparition of a hawk, and she left the Tuileries, in which she had been omnipotent, accompanied by the two attendants who remained faithful to her, one an Italian, the other an Austrian!

"We certainly pity the sovereign abandoned under these tragical circumstances," writes Baron

Verly, " but whose fault was this? It was she, the unfortunate Empress, who was responsible in a large proportion for the downfall of her throne! And the frightful, cowardly desertion of her person on September 4 was the consequence of favouritism, of the intrigues conducted in her drawing-rooms by her little Court, which wished to overthrow the true one. She herself opened the door to all those sickly ambitions."

From Dover, which she reached after various incidents, and where some of her courtiers joined her, the Empress went to Chislehurst.

The first step in the new life was to find a quiet habitation.

" Mr. Strode, a rich Englishman who had formerly known the Emperor, came to offer his services to the Empress, and, having learned that Her Majesty was looking for a residence, he suggested his home at Campden Place, Chislehurst.

" An Officer with the Prince Imperial went to see whether the house would be convenient. It was a large and gloomy-looking but comfortable building, situated in a park. Mr. Strode wished to offer it to the Empress. The Prince Imperial's aide-de-camp told him that Her Majesty would not accept it, but that she would rent it from him.

" ' I am disposed to let it,' said Mr. Strode.

" ' The Empress does not intend to have a large establishment, and the rent of this house must be greater than the Empress is prepared to pay.'

" ' How much does the Empress intend to pay?'

The Officer told him.

" ' That is exactly the rent I ask,' rejoined Mr. Strode.

" The transaction was closed, and the Empress went to Chislehurst to live in that unlucky house, in which she proposed to remain only a short time, but where so many tears flowed."

On March 20, the Emperor embarked at Ostend, and the same day landed at Dover, whence he went to Chislehurst by special train.

He was cordially received by the English people, " for they remembered well," says Lord Malmesbury, " the steadfast policy of friendship which he had for twenty years displayed towards England. Englishmen remembered the Crimean war and his sympathetic action when *proprio motu* he took their part against the seizure of the American delegates who were coming over in the British packet. Still more, when in the crisis of our Indian Mutiny, our safety depended on rapid action, the Emperor offered to allow our troops a passage through France."

Lord Malmesbury went to see him on the following day, and was received in the most hearty manner, Napoleon saying: " It was very nice of you to come to see me."

" I confess I never was more moved. His quiet and calm dignity and absence of narrowness and irritability were the grandest examples of human moral courage that the severest Stoic could have imagined. I felt overpowered by the position."

The British peer could not help thinking of the sad lot of the man " whose race had been so successful and romantic, now without a crown, with-

out an army, without a country or an inch of ground which he could call his own. He conversed with a dignity and resignation which might be that of a fatalist."

His story was told in a quiet, natural way—not a single complaint; he said that "he had been *trompé* as to the force and preparation of his army. Nor did he abuse anyone until I mentioned General Trochu, who deserted the Empress, whom he had sworn to defend, and gave Paris up to the mob. '*Ah! Voilà un drôle!*' exclaimed the Emperor."

By a strange coincidence, Napoleon lived at Chislehurst in the same house which twenty years previously had been occupied by a pretty English girl by the name of Emmy Rowles, with whom he had been in love and whom he had intended to marry.

The court of the dethroned sovereigns was composed of the Duc de Bassano, Count Clary, Dr. Corvisart, M. F. Pietri and Mesdames Lebreton and de Lherminat. M. Filon was tutor to the Prince Imperial. Baron Verly says that "they eliminated all those who were devoted to the Emperor and whom he loved."

At the beginning, life at Chislehurst was difficult, for the Emperor had no money; he had spent too much on pleasure and given away too freely. The Princess von Metternich and Duchesse de Mouchy were obliged to lend the Empress their linen.

November 15th came; it was the first anniversary which the Empress was to celebrate in exile.

Those who surrounded her feared the sadness of that day, which formerly had been spent so joyfully. However, the eve brought carriages full of flowers, of which there was such a profusion that every room was filled, and the house of misfortune looked gay. The day was spent in an agreeable manner.

About twenty people were present at the dinner. Some one said: "When ten people gather, there are five different opinions represented."

"Yes," rejoined the Emperor, "such is the French character. Here, all opinions are represented."

The courtiers protested, but the Emperor smiled and, turning to Eugénie, said:

"You, for instance, are always a Legitimist. You admire the Count de Chambord, and even his proclamations to the French."

"Yes, you are right," said the Empress.

"Mme. Lebreton is an Orléanist. As to you, Conneau, you are a *communard*," said the Emperor maliciously.

Then the Prince Imperial asked ironically:

"I see that mama is a Legitimist, Mme. Lebreton an Orléanist, Dr. Conneau a Republican; who then is an Imperialist here?"

While the Emperor was working on his important book: *Les forces militaires de la France en 1870*, the Empress' party was reorganised and the intriguing began again. When the MS. was finished the Count de la Chapelle was entrusted with its publication in Paris. The Empress and her clique were against its appearance, for they

feared that it would show up certain personalities in an unfavourable light.

The Count de la Chapelle, who became very intimate with the Emperor, wrote:

"I became acquainted with all the intrigues of the Regency against the Sovereign. I learned how the statesmen who were indebted for everything to the Emperor continued to betray him at the Tuileries and during the unfortunate campaign of 1870. I was able to discover that duplicity with which the Emperor was surrounded on the throne, and which led him, with France, into an abyss."

Napoleon expected to return to France.

"All the arrangements were complete, although the plot was directed by a few people; the ordinary leaders of the party were kept outside, nor were the Empress and her partisans admitted into the secret. The Prince Imperial alone was initiated. The majority of the Chamber was against Thiers; the reaction in favour of the Empire had made extraordinary progress . . . the Republic existed only in name . . . the Emperor was expected."

But all this devotion and all these hopes were made vain by the ordains of Providence: the Emperor's malady made such progress that he consented to an operation being performed. "In a month, we will be riding," he would say. His hopes were never realised. He passed away on January 9, 1873, without a parting word.

It is necessary to quote the Count de la Chapelle once more, for his statement is of the greatest consequence.

"The operation of lithotrity, performed by Sir Henry Thompson, did not cause the Emperor's death. That operation, which was repeated several times, was always carried out satisfactorily. The Emperor's state of health was good; this is proved by the official bulletins of the physicians and by the following letter addressed to me by Dr. Corvisart:

"Campden Place, January 7th, 1873, at 8 o'clock in the evening.

"My Dear Count,

"I am much pleased to write to you concerning His Majesty. As you are aware, the operation of breaking is going on successfully. To-day, the Emperor has dined, he has no fever and everything goes as well as we could desire.

"The Emperor wishes me to communicate this good news to you.

"Yours, etc.,

"Baron Corvisart.

"Sir Henry Thompson had entirely succeeded in two other operations, and January 13 was fixed for the final one. In order to calm the sufferings of the patient and assure sleep, Sir W. Gull prescribed a potion of chloral, to be taken in the evening.

"On the evening of the 8th, the general state of the Emperor's health was so good that it was decided that the Prince Imperial could return to Woolwich the next day as early as possible. Nevertheless, in order to follow the English

physician's strict instructions, the Emperor was urged to take the prescribed potion. Prompted probably by a presentiment, he refused obstinately, saying that he suffered no pain, that the chloral which composed this potion tired him during the night, that he did not mind if the pain returned, for he was accustomed to it, and that he was determined not to take that drug.

" But Sir William Gull's order was precise, and to overcome the sick man's obstinacy, his attendants appealed to the Empress, and it was to her entreaties and prayers that the Emperor finally yielded and took the dose which was to make him sleep during the night, but which gave him eternal rest. Napoleon III. died from an overdose of chloral! After taking the draught, the Emperor fell asleep; it was nine o'clock in the evening. He woke up only for a few seconds. The following day, at ten o'clock in the morning, he uttered one or two words and passed away."

" On January 9, 1873," says Lord Malmesbury, " he died, released from the storm of a fitful existence, from intense physical suffering and saved from knowing the loss of his only son."

Such was the end of the most conspicuous personage of his time.

" More cosmopolitan than French, at once a dreamer and a man of action, by turns and even sometimes simultaneously a democrat and an autocrat, tormented now by the prejudices of the past, and now by new ideas, the representative of Cæsarism and, at the end of his reign, the champion of popular liberties; looking like a sphinx and not

always able to guess his own riddle, active beneath an indolent appearance, passionate despite an imperturbable indifference, energetic yet with an air of extreme moderation, loving humanity while condemning it, victim of the faults of others still more than of his own, and better than his destiny."

Imbert de Saint-Armand painted this portrait of Napoleon III. after his death, while the Count de Vieil-Castel said of him while he was alive:

"Public opinion is sick, trade is sick, the government is sick and the whole society needs a severe régime. We are beginning to be frightened of the conspirator's policy of which the Emperor is so fond; he makes other nations uneasy, if not ill-disposed to us, he teaches them to have confidence neither in his treaties nor in his would-be friendship, and he does nothing to make France's position stronger, or at least to assure her peace in the future. If the Emperor were to die to-morrow, we would again be thrown into the abyss of revolution. . . .

"France has lost her supremacy since she made the other nations suspicious and since she allowed the triple alliance of the Courts of the North. She is suspected by Russia, by Prussia, by Austria, and also by England, who hesitates to enter into an alliance with her. She is suspected and isolated; she allowed Denmark to perish, and encouraged the ambition of Prussia, hoping to obtain the Rhine frontier. Vain hope! The Emperor has always followed the same conspirator's policy; his government is a workshop of conspirators against all other governments. He has reached the point when his

word and his treaties are no longer considered as binding. . . ."

The following narrative left by Baron Verly is very cruel indeed, but it must be quoted for the sake of truth:

"My father decided to take me to the funeral of the one whose son was my playmate, and we left for London. The weather was sad and rainy, and the express from the Gare du Nord was filled with those who formerly frequented the Tuileries. The sculptor Clesinger travelled in the same compartment.

"At Calais, the sea was so rough that we waited quite a long time before the boat left. It was full up. . . . A group of three women, still pretty, with fair hair, were chatting gaily. 'Who are those women?' I asked my father. 'My dear boy, look at them well,' he answered; 'they are the fatal advisers and bad geniuses of the Empress; I hope the Prince will be energetic enough to drive them all away.'

"When we arrived in London, as my father needed some information concerning the funeral, we went to the house of a family the head of which directed everything and to whom the Empress left full power." (This was the "vice-Emperor" Rouher's house.) "I was astounded and scandalised—I was then very young—to see a most sumptuous dinner-party for which the women were décolletées—it is true that the frocks were black—and for which the men wore white ties. At the same hour, there was lying dead at Chislehurst the old Emperor, whose political downfall had been

caused by those very men—the men whom he had fostered and raised to power."

It is not necessary to add anything to that gloomy and depressing picture.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE PRINCE IMPERIAL

IN October 1853 all eyes were fixed on Eugénie, and an habitué of the Tuileries wrote :

" The Empress is to be a mother. It has been noticed that of late the Emperor, when at the theatre, or driving, or elsewhere, places the Empress on his right, instead of on his left. In old days the Queen was placed on the right of the Sovereign only when in an interesting condition. This ancient custom was first revived by the Emperor some months ago, when the Empress' hopes were disappointed. It is concluded that Her Majesty is again in a situation that permits Napoleon to hope for an heir to his throne. It is also noticeable that the Empress, contrary to her custom, attends meets in a carriage, instead of on horseback."

But the Empress was not more fortunate this time than before. In regard to the former, the ex-detective already several times quoted wrote on April 20, 1853 : " The *grossesse* of the Empress is now well accredited, but malicious tongues have it that the illustrious infant will be given the name of

Aurora. Why? Because it will be born before the day." On February 7, 1854, the same man wrote in his diary: "It is said that the Empress is very sad, and this is attributed to the sorrow caused by her sterility."

It was only on March 16, 1856, that the Parisians were awakened by the booming of guns and pealing of bells which announced that the Empress had been delivered of a son. When the King of Rome was born, only twenty-one guns announced the fact; the birth of the Prince Imperial was saluted by a hundred and one detonations. The news was received with enthusiasm not only by Paris, but by the whole of France. Presents poured in from all quarters, and the baby received no fewer than twenty-eight orders in his cradle; the *Dames des Halles* sent a deputation to welcome the Imperial infant. The Emperor ordered 1,000,000 francs to be distributed at once for charitable purposes; the Municipal Council voted 200,000 francs to feast the poor.

Théophile Gautier wrote the following poem in honour of the Empress and the Prince.

"Au vieux palais des Tuileries,
Chargé déjà d'un grand destin,
Parmi le luxe et les féeries,
Un enfant est né ce matin.

C'est un Jesus à tête blonde,
Qui porte en sa petite main,
Pour globe bleu, la paix du monde
Et le bonheur du genre humain.

La crêche est faite en bois de rose;
Les rideaux sont couleur d'azur;
Paisible, en sa conque il repose,
Car *fluctuat nec mergitur.*

Sur lui la France étend son aile ;
A son nouveau-né, pour berceau,
Délicatesse maternelle,
Paris a prêté son vaisseau.

Qu'un bonheur fidèle accompagne
L' enfant impérial qui dort,
Blanc comme les jasmins d'Espagne,
Blond comme les abeilles d'or."

His Holiness Pope Pius IX., represented by Cardinal Patrizi, stood godfather to the Prince, and Queen Josephine of Sweden and Norway, represented by the Grand-Duchess Stéphanie of Baden, was his godmother.

At his baptism he received the names of Napoleon-Eugéne-Louis-Jean-Joseph, but he was called Louis; some popular wit gave him the pet name of Lulu.

The Empress stood godmother to all the girls born on the same day as the Prince; they were baptised Eugénie, and received a present. The boys born on the same day were free from military service. M. Bouvier, president of the High Court of Montélimar, declined this privilege for his son, and for this offence he remained until his death at that secondary post.

Mme. Murat was appointed *gouvernante* to the little prince, Mesdames Bizot and de Brancion were under-governesses.

Napoleon was very indulgent to his son, while Eugénie was very severe indeed. The Emperor suffered; he was fond of forgetting his cares in the company of the child, and often walked with him in the garden of the Tuileries. The child prattled

gaily, spoke to the sentries and looked at the promenaders.

One day a crowd gathered round them, the little boys looking with wide-open eyes on the prince. Napoleon sent his son to them, saying : " Lulu, go and play with them." When Eugénie learned of this she was furious, for, according to her *parvenue's* notions it was beneath the Imperial dignity for her son to play with children of the people.

The boy loved his father, and very often found his way into his study, where he was fond of playing. One day he broke a vase, which Napoleon prized greatly, for it had belonged to his uncle at St. Helena. The Emperor rang the bell for an attendant, and simply said to him : " Take the Prince away." That was the whole scolding. He was so indulgent that one day he allowed the boy to besmear a good picture by Ziégler. The Empress was again very angry, and this time she was right.

The Marquise de Taisey-Châtenoy tells us the following story :

" Old Monsieur de Saint-Aubin was paying his court to the young and pretty Mlle. Bouvet. One day, he brought her a bouquet and a bag of *bon-bons;* she first refused the sweetmeats, but the little old gentleman insisted so much that, in order to get rid of him, she accepted them. She did not wish to eat them, and did not know what to do. Just then the Baron de Bourgoing passed. ' My dear Baron, I was waiting for you ; be so kind as to give these sweetmeats to your little Irène.' And Mlle. Bouvet left him.

" Monsieur de Bourgoing was going out to ride, and was very much embarrassed with the dainties. Dr. Conneau came in. ' I was lying in wait for you, doctor. My daughter Irène asked me to give you these sweetmeats for your son.' And he went to his horse, which was ready saddled. The physician was very annoyed : ' I shall return home very late, and I cannot carry those sweetmeats about with me for hours.' The Prince Imperial rushed in like the wind. ' *Monseigneur*, here are bonbons which I brought *de la part de mon fils*.'

" The little Prince began to munch the dainties joyfully, but a severe voice interrupted his pleasure. ' What, Louis? I have forbidden you to eat sweetmeats.' It was the Empress, accompanied by her reader ; she took the bag from the child and handed it to . . . Mlle. Bouvet. Everybody began to laugh heartily, and the Empress was then informed of the little adventure. ' You will have to eat them,' she said to Mlle. Bouvet, who made a grimace of distaste.

" Somebody suggested that the dainties should be given to the guardsman on sentry-go close by. The little Prince, delighted with the idea, ran up to the soldier, who, obeying orders to the very letter, remained motionless. It was in vain that the child grew impatient, and stormed to attract his attention. Finally, tired by the effort, he emptied the bag into the soldier's boot."

The Emperor used to take the Prince with him to Cabinet meetings ; often the boy, carried away by impetuosity, would join in the serious conversation, and when his mother told him that children

should be seen and not heard, Napoleon would intervene indulgently: "Let him do it; I like to hear his opinions."

One day, while there was fighting going on at the front, the Prince asked for something which his mother refused to give him. Then the news of a victory arrived, and she said that his fancy might be gratified. "Only one battle!" exclaimed the boy. "My uncle won many more than that!"

At eight years of age he already rode with great ease and elegance, and when he attended reviews with the Emperor, in his little uniform of a grenadier of the Guard, on his pony, Bouton d'Or, the soldiers cheered him to the echo. After his appointment as a corporal in the 1st Grenadier Guards, he wore his busby proudly, and anything could be done with him by the words: "Do not do that, *monseigneur;* you will dishonour your uniform."

The Empress while at the Tuileries was always very severe towards her son; she who during her own youth had known almost no restraint. She was so violent that she would not control her temper even in the presence of the youthful Prince, and Princess Mathilde tells the following story: "Lately, the Emperor and the Empress had a violent discussion in the presence of the Prince, during lunch. After lunch the Emperor took his son to his study, and there the boy said to his father: 'It seems to me that *maman a dit bien des bêtises.*'"

During her exile, and under the influence of misfortune, that severity changed into tyranny. She

who had many times paid 100,000 francs for a frock allowed the pretender to the throne of France £20 a month! The two following stories related by the Count d'Herisson illustrate the charges made against her of caring nothing for making him happy or for helping him to uphold the dignity of his rank.

"M. Bachon, the Prince's former equerry, went one day to pay his respects to him at Chislehurst. Naturally, the conversation turned on horses, and M. Bachon, noticing the Prince's mount, could not help saying: '*Monseigneur*, it is impossible that you should continue riding that horse. I now understand why Your Highness declines to hunt. Pray leave it to me; have confidence in my respectful and deep attachment; I will find you a horse worthy of his rider.'

"A few days later, M. Bachon, having searched the whole of London, returned to Chislehurst; he had found what he was looking for, a splendid horse, for the comparatively moderate price of £200. But the Prince, very far from sharing his equerry's enthusiasm, said to him: 'Two hundred pounds! You say it is cheap? I am ready to believe you, but it is too much for me. I have not that amount.'

"'That does not matter, *monseigneur;* if you allow me to do so, I will ask the Empress.' Here the Prince's countenance changed completely, and he forbade the Empress to be asked for anything. 'Now I understand many things which I did not see before,' said M. Bachon. 'I am not rich, but I have a small vineyard, which I will sell. Your Highness cannot ride a horse with unsound legs and risk your life in that way.' The Prince thanked

M. Bachon heartily, but forbade him to sell the vineyard."

Another story taken from the same source :

" Count Schouwaloff had been very kind to the Prince, who considered it his duty to invite the Count to dinner at the St. James' Hotel, at the corner of Piccadilly and Berkeley Street; he also asked General Fleury.

" A few minutes before the appointed time, General Fleury arrived, accompanied by Arthur Meyer, to-day editor of the *Gaulois*, and who, at that time, was only a youth.

" General Fleury said to the Prince : ' M. Arthur Meyer was with me, *monseigneur*, at the moment when I was going to join you. I took the liberty of bringing him, and I thought that you would forgive my taking such a liberty and would be kind enough to receive M. Meyer, who is a great friend of mine.' The Prince received M. Meyer cordially, another cover was added, and dinner was served.

" After the coffee, the cigars, the liqueurs, and that moment of *bien-être* which usually follows good repasts and which one makes as long as possible, the Prince went to pay the bill. Whether it was that the rank of the guests prompted the hotel-keeper to increase the bill considerably, or whether one unexpected guest had increased the expense to a degree for which the Prince was not prepared, at any rate he found himself short of about thirty shillings. The head waiter went quietly to General Fleury and told him that the Prince wished to speak to him. It was General Fleury's purse that supplied the deficit."

When the Prince left Woolwich, he was obliged to decline to take part in his comrades' celebrations, for he could not afford to do so.

His position was both unpleasant and hard, for although he was not desirous of excessive freedom —even when he came officially of age on June 16, 1874, at the age of eighteen—he desired to be free from the awkward and nonsensical tutelage of the Empress and Rouher. After long discussions, it was decided that this question would be settled by four arbitrators; the mother and the son signed an agreement by which they bound themselves to accept the arbitrators' decision. Pinard, Grandperret, Busson and Bilhaut, all ex-ministers, formed the court. Rouher proposed that he should act in the capacity of advocate for both parties.

Finally, the arbitrators agreed upon certain rules, to be observed by mother and son in their mutual relations. But as this decision did not suit the Empress, she refused to recognise it. The arbitrators did not insist, through respect for the Empress, the Prince did not wish for acute strife with his mother, and decided to leave England in order to escape her yoke.

There seems little doubt, in fact, that this was the cause of his resolve to take up arms as a volunteer with the English troops in Zululand. His mother made no objection, though the Bonapartist leaders, alarmed at the danger of losing him in war, opposed the scheme strongly. Rouher, who until then had done almost anything with the Prince, this time found him determined.

After the Prince had sailed for the Cape, the

Bonapartist leaders assembled in a conference which lasted until three o'clock in the morning. It was decided that three of them should go to the ship's first port of call and again beg the Prince to give up his enterprise. When those three men went to Rouher on the evening of their departure for his final instructions, they found him in despair, saying with tears in his eyes: "You cannot go . . . it is impossible!" Rouher, not daring to accept the full responsibility of their effort, had wired to the Empress, and she had forbidden him to interfere.

The Prince arrived at the headquarters of Lord Chelmsford, the Commander-in-Chief, on April 9, 1879, and the following month distinguished himself in several encounters. On June 1st he went out with a reconnoitring party in the neighbourhood of Itelezi; they were surprised by Zulus, and the Prince, trying to mount his horse, slipped, fell to the ground, and was killed. It has been said that his equipment was of a very inferior quality and that the saddle-girth broke.

Queen Victoria sent Lord Sidney to the Empress with the sad news. The Duc de Bassano, who was at Campden Place, went in to see the Empress first, and she, seeing the sad expression of his face, had a presentiment.

"Madam, there is bad, very bad news from the Prince," he said.

"My son, my poor son! . . . is it necessary to go to the Cape?"

"Madam . . . it is useless . . . it is too late," he said, sobbing.

The Empress understood, uttered a cry and fainted.

"When there was *a rapprochement* with Prince Napoleon," says Irénée Mauget, "Eugénie admitted to him that she was hard on her son, but added that she was purposely so and for his benefit. The indifference she has since shown in regard to the monument erected to the Prince Imperial's memory by subscription, allows one to make strange reflections. Not once, during her numberless visits to Paris, has she visited that monument; and she declined to pay the wages of the keeper."

Fathom who can the abyss of the human heart. . . .

## CHAPTER XXVII

### CONCLUSION

THE Count de Vieil-Castel, in his characteristics of the Empress, said:

"She is avaricious, and thinks only how to acquire property. When the Emperor receives a request to accept a dedication of some work of art, she makes him refuse, alleging that he will be obliged to give some present in exchange. Were she a little *bourgeoise*, *elle ferait danser l'anse du panier.*"

Such was Eugénie's character when she lived at the Tuileries and squandered millions on her toilettes and astounding luxury. At Chislehurst she became still more *petite bourgeoise*, and made strenuous efforts to regain possession of every sou of hers which still remained in France.

In Spain she had important property. While at the height of her glory, when she could dispose, so to speak, of the treasure of France, she purchased from the jeweller Bochmer two earrings, formed of two big diamonds, and cut in the shape of pears, which were once the property of Marie-Antoinette.

She also acquired the oblong diamonds of marvellous beauty which also belonged to that most beautiful and most unfortunate of Queens. Besides those wonderful jewels she had the pearl necklace, which she wore on the day of her wedding, and which was worth £50,000.

She became a shrewd business woman and accumulated considerable property. She left Chislehurst and acquired a fine estate at Farnborough, where she built a chapel, which she pompously called Saint-Michael's Abbey, and in which she had erected three tombs: for the Emperor, for the Prince Imperial and for herself.

Then she purchased a beautiful villa at Cap Martin, where she passed the winters, and where she once received the Emperor of Austria.

The nomadic habits contracted while she was young made her travel continually. Under the name of the Countess de Pierrefonds, and accompanied by the Countess Tascher de la Pagerie, Mme. Lebreton, Mme. de Lerminhat, the Duc de Bassano, the Marquis de Tascher and M. Piétri, she visited Italy, Scotland and Spain. She had interviews with the Duc d'Aumale and the Prince of Wales, subsequently Edward VII. She did not disdain even to accept the hospitality of James Gordon Bennett's yacht.

In 1907, she was well received at Vienna by the Emperor of Austria, who sent the Imperial train for her, and on her arrival in his capital, met her at the station and kissed her on both cheeks. The same year she enjoyed herself in Norway in the

company of the grandson of William of Prussia, who in 1870 had taken her husband prisoner, defeated France and humiliated her by being proclaimed Emperor at Versailles.

Every time she had a chance she would visit Queen Victoria, who remained steadfast in her sentiment towards the dethroned Empress, and there is an amusing story in connection with one of Eugénie's visits to Queen Victoria while the English Sovereign was at Nice.

The French Government, wishing to show respect to the Queen of England during her sojourn on French soil, always gave her a guard of honour, a detachment of infantry being installed in the outbuildings of the hotel at which she was stopping and turning out to salute all official personages whom she would receive.

One day, a French police official who was responsible for Queen Victoria's welfare while on French soil noticed that the guard of honour was standing under arms in the courtyard of her hotel. Surprised, he asked the officer in command what the reason for this was. The officer replied that he had turned out his men because the Queen's courier told him that a crowned head was expected.

"A little vexed on account of my ignorance," said the official, "I inquired of M. Dossé, the courier, who was the crowned head expected.

"'What? Don't you know?'

"'*Ma foi, non.*'

"'Well, we expect the Empress Eugénie.'

"I jumped.

" ' What! ' I said. ' You wish the soldiers of the Republic to render honour to the former Empress of the French? '

" ' I must admit,' replied Dossé, ' that I did not look at it from that point of view.'

" ' But I do! . . . Command the soldiers to withdraw at once,' I said to the officer, who did not seem to understand anything."

Of all the women who played a part in the human comedy of the second half of last century, Eugénie de Montijo, Empress of the French, was not only the most interesting, but also the most complex.

Have these pages dealt too severely with her? They have at all events tried to do justice, and to give some idea of that life which has glided past like a dream, a starry dream that changed into a horrible nightmare. She arouses the same interest as Marie-Antoinette, whom she admired very much.

But, after all, when one thinks of her, of her husband, and of her son, how very *à propos* one finds the following paragraph, which one reads in the voluminous Memoirs which Count de Vieil-Castel has left to posterity as a curious document of the history of that great adventure called the Second Empire:

" Leverrie, the astronomer, gave a little lecture at the Château de Compiègne. He spoke of the plurality of worlds and demonstrated that ours is but a barely perceptible atom in the immensity of the universe.

" The Empress said slowly and in a melancholy voice: ' Mon Dieu! What petty things we are! ' "

THE END

# APPENDIX I

## " FOREIGN LAW COURTS—SPAIN
## " ROYAL CHANCERY OF VALLADOLID
## " DECREE NISI OF A DIVORCE GRANTED IN FRANCE IN 1813 TO SPANISH SUBJECTS

" Don Joaquin de Montijo was a captain in the provincial regiment of Segovia in 1810, when he married Doña Maria del Pilar de Peñansade; she belonged to a well-to-do and respectable family of Fuentepelayo, near Segovia.

" Made a prisoner at Ciudad Rodrigo, a few months after his marriage, he was conducted to France, and when his wife learned that he was well treated, that he had been appointed commandant of a depot of Spanish prisoners and that his pay was almost as big as that which he had received in Spain, she joined him there. The good understanding between husband and wife did not last long. Both, it would appear, committed grave faults which troubled the order of their life, disturbed their finances, made them incur debts, and finally led to a separation.

" Don Joaquin de Montijo, reduced to extremes

and deprived of his post because half of the prisoners were transferred from Bourges to Dijon and Carcassone, entered the French army. He was hardly settled with his new regiment when his wife came to him. He did not wish to receive her, and at the end of a few months they were divorced in France, in November, 1813.

" As soon as King Ferdinand re-entered Spain, Doña Pilar returned to Fuentepelayo, to her family, with her two-and-a-half-year-old son, and lived there six years in perfect tranquillity.

" Don Joaquin de Montijo remained in France on half-pay until 1820, when the King of Spain took the oath to the Constitution of the Cortes. He then re-entered Spain in order to join the new government and went to live near Arévala, his native town, where he had an estate. From there, Señor de Montijo wrote to his wife to send him his son. Doña Pilar answered that she would not do so and that if he wished to see the boy he could do so by coming to her. Señor de Montijo decided to go in order to bring back his son, but Doña Pilar would not agree to part with him. After a few weeks Don Joaquin again went to see his son ; the second visit was less stormy ; Don Joaquin again fell in love with his wife and, after several visits, they decided to live together. In Spain only the Penansades family and Don Joaquin's two brothers were aware of the French divorce.

" Señora de Montijo left Fuentepelayo and her family and went with her son to Arévala, to her husband's house, in July, 1820. This reunion gave them a few years of happiness, broken only by death. In 1823 Don Joaquin fell from his horse and, after three months of sickness, died on October 30, 1823.

" His son, Don Augustin de Montijo, inherited

his father's estates. His mother was the trustee, and she continued to live near Arévala in her husband's house.

" His daughter, then nine months old, died shortly after his death. This was not Doña Pilar's last misfortune, for in the month of September last, she lost her only son, whom she loved so dearly that she never left him even for a moment. He was a healthy boy of fifteen, and died of smallpox.

" Doña Pilar's pain was still further increased, if this were possible, by the conduct of her two brothers-in-law, Don Antonio and Don Branlio de Montijo, who made her leave her late husband's house, under the pretext that she could not call herself his widow because of the divorce. The High Court decided on January 16, 1827, that ' whereas a divorce was granted in 1813 in France, and notwithstanding posterior cohabitation, the estates shall be returned to the brothers of the late Joaquin de Montijo, his legitimate heirs in the absence of direct heirs.'

" Doña Pilar de Peñansade, widow de Montijo, appealed from this decision to the Royal Chancery of Valladolid. Here is its decision :

" ' Whereas Doña Maria del Pilar was united on February 8, 1810, to the late Don Joaquin de Montijo and became his lawful wife, as is stated in the register of the parish of Saint Francis of Fuentepelayo ;

" ' Whereas the divorce of which Don Antonio and Don Branlio de Montijo took advantage is contrary to divine, as well as Spanish, law, and was granted in a foreign country then under the sway of the government of an usurper, a government both irreligious and illegitimate, and consequently null in Spain ;

" ' Whereas the said divorce was still further annulled by the remorse of the married couple, who became reunited and spent together the last three years of Don Joaquin de Montijo's life;

" ' Whereas the latter was in no way obliged to make a last will, since he left two children and considered that a will was not necessary to safeguard the interests of his lawful wife;

" ' Whereas it is proper that the wishes of the deceased man should be interpreted in the light of his conduct during the last years of his life;

" ' This Court orders:

" ' That the right of using and enjoying the profits of the estates left by Don Joaquin de Montijo belongs to his widow, etc.;

" ' That Don Antonio and Don Branlio de Montijo should pay the costs.' "

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